2017 Eckhart Tolle Becoming A Teacher of Presence Audiobook

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 2:33:50)

To have an intimate group again after quite a long time. I can look at everybody. We can exchange hugs.

Just got back a few days ago from a week-long retreat in New York with close to 400 people. In some ways, one could say that this little retreat is experimental. The form of it is experimental.

It seems we're going to address questions arising from working with people, having groups, working with individuals. That's the form or the content. And that's new.

What is not experimental is the essence of this retreat. And no matter whether this is the only one of this kind that is ever going to happen, or whether this particular form of retreat is the first of many, or whether it will develop into something else, the form is always secondary anyway, because the form is the content, whatever we talk about. Helpful, yes.

Helpful pointers. And yet, that's not the essence of our retreat. The essence is the state of presence.

If you can dwell in presence, whatever you need to know will come out of that. And more important than any of the things that we may talk about tonight is to recognize the depth of the state of presence and what it is that keeps you from living. In presence as a continuous state.

Because the moment you live in presence as a continuous state or predominant state, you are a teacher, as the Course in Miracles calls it, a teacher of God, whether you have formal groups or not. You cannot not teach presence when you live in presence. Teach in a wider sense.

Because whoever you meet is affected by presence. And we are here also to recognize what it is that keeps us from living in presence. And that is our belief in thought.

Not recognizing the relative nature of all thought. And completely believing in whatever thought arises in your mind. So we are here also to become aware of our relationship with thought.

Particularly this weekend. And I'll be reminding you of that. The non-recognition that every thought that arises in your mind is a perspective, a viewpoint from one angle.

It can never encapsulate the whole. It always is a fragment of the totality. Not seeing

that, you become identified, drawn into, trapped by a fragmented way of being in the world.

Your sense of self clings especially to long-held thoughts and thought patterns. Like a bulldog not going to let go of this one. Because you derive a sense of self from identification with that.

Not recognizing that it is a perspective. No more. You could move a few steps, metaphorically speaking, and you would see the same reality from a different perspective.

I believe it was in the 70s, early 70s, a young girl called Patricia Hearst got kidnapped by terrorists. And after spending a few months with them, being kidnapped, and they must have spoken to her, she suddenly took part in bank robberies, and so on. She became one of them.

They explained to her their perspective, their viewpoint. And they explained, no, your perspective was totally wrong. The system is actually evil.

It's not us who are evil. It's the system that's evil, can't you see? And then it gives you the reasons, moi the system.

It's not difficult to convince you that the system is evil, easy. It's a fragment of the truth. And if you get drawn into a fragment, that becomes you.

Especially those ones that you've bitten into, and their long-held beliefs, or whatever it may be, on politics, diets, men, women, money, power. And then this is absolutely true. Stepping back from thought internally, one or two steps back, and their thoughts, quite useful sometimes, useless at other times, and seeing that not one thought could encapsulate the whole, the totality.

And you don't have to work out some kind of answer in your mind that explains the totality, the whole. Some kind of system of thought. They tried it.

A system of thought that explains it all. And communism became, was something like that. It could explain everything, everything you could explain from that particular perspective.

Any event would suddenly make sense, you would explain it. And then you try to impose the system on reality. So the greatest freedom is the freedom from thought.

Which first of all means not recognizing the relativity of thought. You're not free. Never being able to stop thinking.

That's the essence of bondage. And your effectiveness, as, for lack of a better word, as a teacher, depends to a large extent on your relationship with thought. And your non-

identification with thought.

You don't need to demand that you should be free of thought from now on. No. Just step back from it and see its relative nature.

And anything that you cling to in the realm of thought eventually will obscure your ability to teach, to hold presence. And sooner or later, at some point, it'll come up and you'll be defending yourself. Defending your viewpoint.

Defending your position. And it's quite something to separate yourself from that. Enormous.

You can notice a clinging, yes, okay, I'll let go of, but not that one. Not this one. Surely that's right, what I believe about this situation or this person or that.

Surely that's right. Another way of putting it is that no thought is dreadfully important. But as I sometimes put it, don't take your thoughts too seriously.

As you sit here and the rest of the weekend, it's just thought. You're so much vaster than that. Tonight, this is just a meditation.

It doesn't look like a meditation, but it is. A meditation takes you out of identification with thought. And then tomorrow we'll be ready to use thought when it comes.

Maybe occasionally recognize that we have identified with a position, a mental position. It's become, a thought has become a me, has become a self. And then emotion comes in.

It's energized by an emotion. That's, I am, that is me. I must defend myself.

And watch that. Tonight, we are simply stepping out of thought. It's just a step back, one or two steps back.

Perhaps you can sense your body as you sit here, the aliveness in the energy field of the body. And it's easier to step back. And outside of thought, there is no problem.

And you have no problem. All problem is thought. So the moment you step out of thought, identification with thought, is also the realization that you have no problem.

Ever. Now. It's a collapse of a problematic sense of self.

It dissolves. And what's left, when there are no problems, are occasional challenges. But only in the now.

They cannot be anywhere else. Now, this moment, what's, is there a challenge? And you will recognize a challenge, that is.

And with every challenge, your alertness rises. You wake up a bit more. More intense presence.

And you may all be at this stage already, where that is possible. Instead of a challenge pulling you into more complete identification with thought and all the mental, emotional, reactive patterns, all strengthening a false sense of me, of self. Instead, the challenge, something goes wrong, you lose something, a difficult person, whatever form a challenge takes, if things are not going the way they should be, that's a pseudo-challenge, because the mind has created how things should be.

And then it's, if it's a true challenge, you face it. And there's an alertness in which it happens. And there's no reference to thought as to how am I going to solve this challenge, what am I going to do about it.

There's contact with an intelligence greater than thought. Alert stillness. No working out.

And out of that arises insight, realization, or right action. No longer right action, trying to figure out right and wrong, what's right and wrong, through the mind. And the mind can justify anything.

The state is right, the terrorist will justify this is right. Easy to find justifications, further thought to substantiate your position of rightness. So trying to figure out right and wrong through thought is impossible.

In the Koran it says, thou shalt not kill, but unfortunately the sentence continues, except for a just cause. Hmm, well, then thought comes in, of course I have a just cause, let me tell you why. And you lose the feeling of aliveness, because while I'm telling you why mine is a just cause, I get trapped more and more in a world of mental conceptualization.

I can no longer sense that which is beyond concept. Life, the aliveness in each human being, completely deadened through that. And I'm explaining why this is a just cause.

So the terrorist does that in an extreme form. He deadens the group of people through putting labels on them, concepts, and totally identified with them. You can no longer sense their aliveness, and you don't sense your own aliveness anymore, because the moment you trap other people in mental labels, you've trapped yourself.

You can do anything and you don't know what you're doing anymore. But everybody has that to some extent, that identification with thought. In a smaller way, nobody in this room would go out and blow up a hundred or a thousand or several thousand people.

Nobody is that unconscious. And everybody in this room is already moving out of that, and yet the root patterns which are at the core of human unconsciousness have been for thousands and thousands of years. The root patterns of that are in everyone, and it's only in you that it can be dissolved.

And what you've done then is immeasurable, not just you haven't done it for yourself. The whole of humanity, one human being becoming free of that, has an enormous effect on the rest of humanity. So to see that, and one label, if there's only one label left in you that you completely believe in concerning a situation or person, that one will keep you trapped.

And it looks harmless enough, but it'll keep you trapped in thought. It'll be that area where thought clings to you and you cling to thought, and your sense of self clings to thought. The deeper meaning of forgiveness, which is a spiritual term, is no longer clinging to thoughts, because every thought ultimately is a judgment.

And wisdom is not judgment, but the relinquishment of judgment. And what then emerges from within you is so much vaster than thought. The state of pure awareness that's already in you would be not quite right to think that is something that you need to attain.

One could say it's already there underneath thought in you, and never recognized by thought. Thought cannot understand it. And maybe arising in you far more than you realize when you start thinking about whether you live in presence or in awareness or not.

No, I don't remember being aware at any time. The mind doesn't understand it. Of course, you can't remember it through thought.

And yet, you may have walked from the door to where you're sitting now in the state of simple, clear, pure awareness. There's nothing spectacular about it. Or you may have put some sugar in your tea or honey, and there was no thought involved, and not absentmindedly either.

Just simple action without the involvement of thought. There may have been the state free of thought when you were listening to somebody sitting next to you at dinner, talking, and pure listening. Perhaps, perhaps not.

It is a wonderful thing when you catch yourself, so to speak, in that state, although the danger is that immediately the mind comes in and claims an attainment. I'm there now. I can do it.

But to catch yourself, it means to become aware directly of awareness. We all know spiritual traditions speak of the state of attention. Buddhists call it mindfulness.

But the most wonderful thing is when you can become aware of that field of a large stillness. And it's not that there's any dualistic relationship here. You are not becoming aware of it.

It's only language does that. It becomes aware of itself. And that is that which gives

satsang.

Not you. Oh, that's a relief. I don't have to do it.

You don't have to even learn how to do it. You couldn't. Satsang is, means, sangha, company, something like that.

Sat means being, being in the company of being. And no person can give satsang. But only when there's the absence of the person.

And what is a person other than identification with thought and thought structures? So to be a highly effective teacher of presence, just don't be there as a person. The slightest clinging to any thought, especially the favorite ones, it keeps you there as a little person.

And for a while it may not interfere. There may even be some, and it'll always catch up in obscure presence. You will never feel ready to teach.

Or if you see, I'm ready now, that's the greatest delusion. And because it's the mind-made self that says, now it's time to teach. You will always feel inadequate as the little me.

But the little me doesn't need to teach. And so you come to love that state of not knowing. Not knowing even how to teach.

Not coming from another position that says, I know, or I know the answers. The most powerful teacher doesn't know and is happy with that. And I don't need to know how to interpret this moment.

And it might be a teaching situation or any moment. Increasingly, being able to live in that way that simply allows to express totally what is to be, don't need to interpret in any way. Especially human beings.

And your task while you're here is not move away from now. Then thought is superfluous. And while you're here, and quite a few times you may miss it, make nothing into a means to an end.

No movement thinking that the result that I want to achieve through this movement is more important than this movement. And now is not a means to a future end. It is completely for it.

So while you walk from here to there, you can be there in every step. While you drink, take off your shoes. Life consists of that.

There's lots full of little things like that. That's all of life, really. You're always sitting, standing and lying somewhere and doing something somewhere.

But the mind is saying big things about it. There's a huge, vast story that you don't really, this isn't the right moment. The story is going somewhere else.

But it's always all the many little things. That's all there is. And something deeper is there in the little things.

When you give them the fearful attention. What is that something deeper when you're just taking off your shoes? Isn't that insignificant?

Putting on your shoes. Surely there are more important things than putting on your shoes. What is the deeper thing about putting on your shoes when you give them your full attention?

It's the attention. In which it happens. That field of bare, alert, still attention.

In which a seemingly insignificant thing happens. But compared to the vastness of that field, everything is insignificant that happens. So it doesn't matter whether you encounter that when you put on your shoes.

Or they give you the Nobel Prize for something. As I saw they have advertisements for a certain watch. I can't remember what watch.

And they call it significant moments. And I don't know what they can express. Particularly those moments you look at your watch when you get the Nobel Prize.

But those come quite rarely. They come occasionally. Big things.

Ultimately no different from small things. And it's not the things, all the little or big things that you do that matter that much. There's something deeper there.

And never getting beyond the surface appearance of things. What a life. And always thinking, well, the next one surely is more important than this one.

Because I know that this one isn't important. Nor depth to life. Surface phenomenon.

The whole of life becomes a surface phenomenon. And you yourself become a surface phenomenon. And then you die.

What happened? I must have missed something. Yes, you did.

You missed the whole thing. So the importance is not in what happens in your life or doesn't happen. That's all relative importance.

Relative importance, yes. But not, one could say, what really matters is to whom it happens. One could put it like that.

Who are you? Who is this happening to? But there's no answer to that in the head as a

concept.

So you're putting on your shoes here. Getting ready for breakfast. And honor this moment completely, fully.

Be there. And you don't need thought. You might have noticed to tie your shoelaces.

Thought is not required. So usually you would be thinking about something totally different. Just quickly get this done out of the way because the mind is already there.

And instead be with this. And it won't be long before you notice that everything that happens there is a dimension of depth. And everything that happens happens in that dimension of depth.

And that depth is an inner field of stillness. And it's very much alive. It's still.

And there you put on your shoes. And then the next thing. Nothing is dreadfully important ever really.

And another thing. And instead of losing yourself in the mind in the next thing, lose yourself in the world. And it's never significant enough.

That's why you always need the next moment. Maybe that one will be more significant than this one. And the completeness is already here.

That out of which everything arises. The ground of being is your essence. And it's here.

And it's so much greater than anything that happens. Vast. It holds.

It encompasses everything. So you know it at first as the alert still attention in which you look at a flower. It could be an action or it could be simply a perception.

And there's not just the flower there now. Because if you don't know the field in which the perception happens and know yourself as the field in which it happens, then all you know is the form that you see. And the tragic thing is it's not going to last very long.

And so that's sad if you don't know that which is beyond form. And then one day you sit there and you've invited a group of people into your home. And there's just that.

And you may look at people unless they are, you know they're not comfortable with it. People, so many people are not comfortable with being looked at. Because they think when you're looking at them, you're thinking something about them.

They don't know that when you're looking at them, there's just stillness. And that's a transmission of presence. And that is teaching beyond any form.

Anything you look at, to just use that particular perception, undergoes changes when

you place pure attention on it. Anything. Especially humans.

And you're not doing anything. And you don't have to do it in an obvious way. So you gaze for five minutes.

It could just be a few seconds. And they may not even know it. There's simply a field of stillness around the perception.

And you don't have to wait for a formal teaching situation to teach. When you look at the supermarket cashier putting things through the computer that reads the barcode, it could be there. That's stillness.

And that's just the looking. And there's a transmission of presence. And you're not doing anything.

There's not me doing anything. The shortest interaction. And a lot of our lives is to do with brief.

We meet many people during the course of the day. Brief interactions. Can you bring the field of stillness into each interaction?

Or are you lost in mind? And so two minds are interacting, thinking they are human beings. Can you bring the field of stillness into each meeting, each encounter?

And be there predominantly as the stillness and not as the person. It doesn't mean you cannot use your form identity when it's needed and speak. But you are there as the essence of who you actually are.

Not the pseudo self, the little me. You are there as the field of stillness in any human interaction. And they may try very hard to pull you out of that.

Their mind says, don't you see that this matters? Come on, feed me this thought. Can't you see that this thought matters?

Come on, let's feed thought together. So the mind will try to draw you into the mind frequency. You know what he did?

And you know what he said then? And then, oh, and it matters. The most beautiful teaching situations are not recognized as teaching situations.

Teaching in the deepest sense, through the simple encounters. And it could just be two seconds, three seconds. And many of you are doing it already and you may not even know it.

I should use the word doing. It's not a doing, but it's like languages like that. Three seconds of stillness while you say hello.

And there's no thought. There's just a depth. That is true.

Healing, one could say, in the deepest sense. You give them their own reality and you haven't given anything. You reflect back to them their own reality and they may not even know it.

And of course, as you know, the essence of our gathering here is not what we talk about, that we do that anyway. But the essence is to know yourself as the stillness underneath the noise. To know yourself as that.

That's the essence. Otherwise, you can forget about having groups or anything. Know yourself as that.

And the practice here is to simply sit. When I'm not speaking, is there anything that you need to add to this moment? Is there anything that needs to be worked out through the head?

The mind might say, I'm not getting enough out of this. He's not, it's not enough. What's the next thing?

Okay, with stillness, yes, I understand that now, but what's the next thing? Now, to make that practice a little easier here, I suggest strongly that between the end of our evening session here tonight and the beginning of our morning session tomorrow, that we don't engage in talking. That makes it a little easier to be still.

Later, it's not required anymore. You can talk and you can allow others to talk. You don't need to demand that they should be still.

But initially, just because we're here to deepen stillness, to know it more fully, be it more fully, it helps occasionally to have a period of non-speaking. And then you can look at things and people and there's the form of that person and there's a stillness in which you're perceiving that. And if there's not the stillness, there's no need to condemn yourself and say, I can't get to the stillness.

I want to perceive people through the stillness, but there's always some noise going on in my head. I just, it's not working for me. I might as well go home.

What to do then? Whatever mental noise is happening while you perceive another human being or anything, you don't take it too seriously. You don't believe in it completely.

It's recognized as thought. Thought is still happening. And so there's the perception and there's thought.

And so the quickest way out of that, it's not even trying to get out of it, is allowing the fact that there is mental noise and not completely believing in it. That allowing creates a

space even around the mental noise, that spaciousness, that stillness. So the spaciousness or the stillness can be around to the perception, but it can also be around, even around mental noise or even about emotional ups and downs, wave movements of emotions.

Even there, the spaciousness, which is another point for the stillness, another same thing, can be there around an emotion or around mental noise. How can it be there? How can you know the spaciousness around?

Mental noise seems to be the absence of spaciousness, the absence of stillness. How can you know it even with it there? And you won't know it as if you knew an object, there it is, because it's the nature of spaciousness, that it cannot be pinpointed or grasped.

Allowing it to be, because it is at this moment, you allow this moment and whatever is in it to be, and there's the spaciousness. At first, it's just not a complete involvement in the mind streams anymore. And that's the beginning of the arising of the spaciousness, the still spaciousness around the world of form, anything, external forms or inner forms as thoughts or emotions, external forms as situations and people.

So you cannot lose yourself completely in mental and emotional forms if you allow them to be. Allow, and this you may forget. And you get back home, and the moment you get back home, all patterns may return.

And the only thing that you forget there really is the allowing. The allowing refers to this moment. Allow it to be as it is.

Not even demand that you should be still. That can lead you astray too. If you're not still, you allow that.

It is. That's how it is. I'm full of mental noise.

That's how it is. It is, noise, and there's a spaciousness. And when that is there, even the mental noise will change.

You don't have to do anything. It then subsides because you're no longer involved that much in it. So you could perhaps put a few until it becomes a normal way to live.

You could put little stickers in every room and on your dashboard. Allow this moment. When you go to bed tonight, thought is unimportant.

Be in the body. Lie there on your back. Enter that field of aliveness.

Not much to think about there. Just that aliveness that is there in every cell. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, uh, uh, hmm, uh, my, me, my problems next week, there's, uh, uh, immediately go into the body.

Be there. Lie on your back. Inhabit the body fully.

And first thing in the morning, you wake up. Instead of going into here, and if you look more clearly, all that, if you go into here, it'll be connected with some, some, after two or three minutes, the first problem will be there. And another, and another.

Go and be in the body. And lie there. And so you, that's a practice.

You go to sleep from there. If you wake up, immediately you go into the body. Intensely.

Hold it. Hold that. And first thing in the morning, lie in that field, that energy field, and then get up.

You find yourself getting up suddenly. And then the alertness that is then there goes with you when you have a shower. And you feel the sense perceptions.

And then you have breakfast again. People won't be speaking, so it will be a little easier to be there. In presence, in stillness.

Now tomorrow we will speak, of course, when we meet. But we'll always go back into stillness. Always back.

You become very intelligent in that way. Because the stillness is pure intelligence. And that's only one aspect of it.

But whether or not you become better at solving IQ tests, that we don't know. It's not that kind of intelligence. It's deeper than that.

There's far greater depth to intelligence than the ability to solve little puzzles. Creative intelligence. I don't want to offend anybody who is good at IQ tests.

So a few reminders. Being in the body. Especially when you lie in bed.

And when you sit here also, of course. It's very helpful. Recognize that no thought is that important.

And it's always only an aspect of the truth. It's not the truth. If that small aspect, small fragment.

And often the opposite is also true. And to know the total truth, you'd have to hold them both together. So not a means to an end.

Any little activity that you do, do it fully. So that it's not serving a future goal. Because that next thing is not going to be that much bigger than this thing.

Be fully in every step. Of course, you'll miss quite a few times. But it doesn't matter.

And you notice a strange thing when you do that. You notice how your relationships, Thiele talk about relationships and they always mean it's relationships, intimate relationships with other humans. But the most common relationships are the relationships in the world of objects.

Nobody would ever pay much attention to that. You're always relating to some objects because you're sitting on them. You wear them, you touch them, handle them.

Continuously, there's a world of so-called inanimate objects around you. And it's completely ignored mostly unless some very spectacular object suddenly comes into your life and somebody gives you a gold bracelet or whatever. But usually you don't pay much attention.

It's a means to an end because the present moment is a means to an end. The world of objects are means to ends and they're handled in that way. And then a strange thing, a shift happens when suddenly the moment is not a means to an end.

Then the world of objects becomes more alive suddenly. It has beingness, it has presence. Every object has beingness and presence as the great artists knew who sometimes painted the most insignificant, seemingly insignificant objects that nobody would have looked at twice.

And now you have to pay $15,000 to buy the painting of an old chair. And somebody looked without the interference of mental labels and thought, truly looked at the most insignificant possible of you can think of, an old, cheap, rickety chair and looked and saw a depth there far beyond the form that appears. Of course, the depth was also in him.

And somehow that got on the canvas, the essence of that realization, the essence of perceiving in that deep way without the interference of thought, somehow God is still there in this work of art. So to see when you handle the world of objects more consciously that every object is alive too. You will almost feel as if it had its own rudimentary field of consciousness.

And you'll notice that the world of objects has a relationship with you. Ultimately, you're not separate, you're one. And ultimately, it's not outside of you anyway.

Let's just pretend for a moment that it is. I've observed a few people who are totally immersed in their mind continuously. And they're always at odds with the world of objects.

They break things, they lose things, things break down for no apparent reason. There's always something that goes wrong for them, as if the world of objects even were against them, let alone the human world. It's the antagonistic relationship to life that is even there in your relationship to objects, let alone human interactions when you live in that way.

So here, be aware of when you, it makes a noise, there's a little noise when you touch something, the shoes, whatever. And so there comes a loving, not love, I would say, a lovingness also towards the world of objects, no longer a fighting attitude towards the world of objects, but a lovingness. As long as you deny the now, you're in a fighting relationship even with the world of objects, let alone humans.

By becoming friendly with the now, the first, you also become friendly with the so-called inanimate world, and it's not really inanimate. And it's a beautiful thing when you see that objects are also treated with loving care in that, not a means to an end. So here, be conscious of your interaction with the world of objects.

I do strange things occasionally. Sometimes I pick something up, it just happens, a knife, a fork in the kitchen, or mug, or a pen, and just hold it and look and feel. And sometimes even a can with something in it, a metal can with baked beans in it or something, and you, oh, it has a presence too.

So there are all these little things here, little practices, ways in which to be, to interact. Attention, now. I know for sure, although I can't tell you how, that when you give attention in that way, full attention to an object or person, it changes, it does something.

Physicists realize that the first time when they notice that the observer who conducts the experiment influences the experiment. The very fact that you're observing changes it. And if you had a stone here and you give it attention, and you have it in your home, and you occasionally look at it, if you could examine the molecular structure, you would notice changes.

It's just a little aside. Don't need to believe that. No need to believe anything here, that's a good thing.

So we will keep, as the Buddhists say, normal silence, stay alert. What we are moving beyond is a personalized existence. And we realize that neither the unconscious state of identification with mind and ego, emotions, nor the state of presence that is arising is personal.

There's nothing personal with being unconscious, and there's nothing personal with being conscious. And that's a great liberation. There's nothing personal in it.

Not a me. The essence of the unconscious state is to look for me, the person, either to look in it, in its future projection of me as the one who is going to be enlightened and seek an enhanced person in that, or to make all movements of thought and the emotional fluctuations that go with it into a personal thing, not recognizing that anger is human anger. It's basically the same vibration, no matter in whom it appears, fear, sadness, any other emotions to do with mental machinery, jealousy, this and that.

They are human emotions. It's not a person. Complete identification with that causes the

illusion that there's somebody there, an entity.

So in the unenlightened state, your life becomes difficult because you personalize the flux of emotions and the stream of thoughts, because thoughts are again human thoughts, the human mind, and identification with the thought stream as me, that's nobody's personal problem. That's the human condition. So it's great to see that there is nothing personal in it, neither here nor there.

And also see that there's a tendency in each one to perpetuate the personal sense of self rather than being a greater opening into life, a manifestation of the one life that expresses itself through this form, which nature is beautifully. Then we create an enclosed sense of self, what about me? That tendency can come up, you observe it in yourself.

Many times to personalize. Somebody wrote a book that's been on many bestseller lists. I've only looked at a few pages, and I only saw one page.

The book is called The Four Agreements. I only remember one of them, and that's take nothing personally. Expressed very simply there, he doesn't go into the detail that, although what I'm saying is not complex, but he doesn't even explain with all that.

He just says simply, don't take anything personally. Because when you personalize, you immediately enter into a reactive relationship with life. The personal selfhood strengthens itself through reactivity, and you gain a stronger sense of self through it, stronger illusion, stronger person.

It feels better for a while because you have fortified the illusion. So as you identify with the reactive force, on one level it feels good, to the illusion it feels good because it has strengthened itself. And now your identification with a position, a mental, and then emotions energize that, and you think you're defending some great truth, which is mental, and there's no absolute truth in the mental realm, but you believe at that time you're defending a great truth, and of course you're defending an illusion.

That's the reason. And it feels good to the illusion, not to you, but you don't know that. That illusion, which sometimes we could call ego, always confuses pleasure and pain.

And the wonderful thing is, as we are stepping out of that, you are no longer identified with mental positions. A me is no longer in, you can still have opinions, but they are not energized by a personal sense of self. You are not in it anymore, and you realize the relativity of every opinion, and then it's fine to have opinions.

And you could even listen to somebody else's opinion, contrary or opposite of yours, and say, oh, yeah, that's interesting, that's another perspective on it. I still prefer my perspective, but that one is valid too. The Buddha talked about this.

He used the expression, I believe the translation is, the thicket of opinions. And it's often emphasized in Buddhism to let go of opinions. But it really means to let go of identification with opinions that give you a me position.

If you hold the space of presence, and there's a group of people, if you start speaking, sharing, some people will express mental positions, perhaps. And just as you recognize mental positions in yourself, you recognize mental positions in others, and allow that. You don't counteract it with your position.

And other minds, there's only one mind, but it looks like different minds in different people. The mind will try to draw you into positions and reaction. When you facilitate a group, the alertness, the alert presence, that does all the work, will almost automatically rise as you hold the space of a group, and there's no body doing it, the dimmer switch, the degree of presence rises, just as it would if you were challenged by a critical situation, a danger situation.

The intensity, the alertness rises, and you feel it throughout the body, a more intense aliveness. And that is the state in which, as one could say, you're holding the space of presence. Presence is doing it, but we're just using language.

You're holding the space of presence. The easiest way to hold the space of presence is when nobody is speaking. So the easiest way to have a group is to have an agreement that nobody's going to say a word.

That's one way. That avoids many problems. But even there, the qualitative difference of that group, there'll be a great difference in the energy field if there's only one person, even if it's just one person who is able to remain in the state of thoughtless awareness, of just being here.

That has an enormous effect on that. And many others can be drawn, if only temporarily, into that state. And then to listen to some tape or for a little while can help also to deepen that state.

And after listening, return into some stillness and again, you will see others are drawn and then the field of presence becomes a collective field in the room. And that has an enormous, it gets an enormous help to enter the collective field of presence. It has nothing to do with emotions or as you sometimes find in meetings, often religious nature, we generate an emotion.

Of course, as you know, it has nothing to do with emotion. So to a pool, when humans meet in the state of presence, there is a pool, one could say, all language is limited, but a pool of presence. And each apparent individual can draw on that and contributes to that.

It's a two-way process. That is also the sacredness of groups that meet in that field

because the field of presence is sacred beyond religion or belief systems. When the mind interprets it, you could say, there was strong Christ presence there.

Yes. Or Buddha nature, just different names. So just the simplest gathering of that kind has a powerful effect, not only on those people that are gathered, but also on the totality.

And that it was no coincidence because everything is connected. Everything is part of a larger whole that we had our gathering with almost 400 people for one week last week. And it happened to coincide in space and time, both space and time.

It happened to coincide with the extreme expressions of human insanity that were taking place not far from there, not far in space and time, very close. There was, it seems, an intensification of the insanity and almost simultaneously an intensification of something else arising. And that was almost 400 people for one week.

It was perhaps the most powerful retreat we've had. And before I didn't know, does a retreat work with almost 400 people? Can that still work?

And the answer is yes, it worked beautifully. So the collective pool of presence that then not only draws out that unconditioned consciousness that is beyond the conditioned mind, but also feeds it. It's a growth happens there of an arising and then it emanates.

And many who are even slightly open to it will benefit from it, no matter how distant they are in space. Slight openness and it makes it easier for everyone in whom presence is already arising through this form. It's like, always use that expression, the flowering, the flowering of consciousness.

Something, a new dimension suddenly coming into this world. So the simplest group already works, meeting in silence, listening maybe to a talk, more silence, and then everybody goes home. That's one way.

And if you facilitate it, you may notice that as people arrive, your alertness rises. It intensifies. It's not a social occasion.

Just as it can at this moment, as I point this out, what does it mean alertness rises? If suddenly this door opened and a bear walked into this room, your alertness would rise or it would fall and you would start screaming and probably do the wrong thing. Completely wrong.

Or the alertness rises. Or you're driving a critical moment, suddenly incredible alertness, no fear in it. I sometimes call it the dimmer.

It's like a dimmer switch. The degree of presence can be just in the background or it can become intense. And that is the intensity that Zen masters point to.

And that's the intensity of just this. And if you move away one inch, I'll hit you with a stick, says the Zen master. So it arises.

It's not consciously willed. It's an opening rather than you cannot try to be present because all trying means you're trying to reach some point in the future. That's the nature of trying.

I need to become more present. But there's not trying in presence. Presence is now.

It's rather all mental noise subsides and that arises. And there comes the bear into the room and you look and you're completely in a state of not knowing in that. At least nothing that the mind would call knowing, words or concepts.

That alertness would be there if you were looking at a stunning scenery, very spectacular. And there's this expression, the word is awe. Maybe that comes because people say, so there's actually a word now, onomatopoeia, whatever it's called, A-W-E.

The state of awe is that state of openness is presence. There's no mind in that state of that openness. And that intensifies when you are in a group situation.

The space, the spaciousness. Now, later I'm going to ask for your, from your experience, what you have learned already from groups, mistakes you have made, if there are mistakes, what worked for you, what didn't work. The next level is, perhaps at some point, words are coming out of your mouth.

Without being drawn into mind identification. So that thought is only giving form to that which arises from beyond thought. No old thought, your viewpoints or your opinions or your beliefs.

And I'm going to tell you what's right. Or facile explanations. That all comes from the accumulated knowledge of the mind.

And that applies even people who have suffered tragedy, people in recent events or in their personal lives, so-called personal. Some mental explanation that, but he said they're all in heaven now, there's nothing to worry about, all those people who died. That may be true, but it's a belief.

And is he really meeting those people who are suffering? I'm not going to give you any methodology or what to do in groups. It needs to arise organically out of presence, but just a few pointers.

What you do will arise, what works will arise from within organically. So not applying some method, you don't need that. It would be an alien thing imposed.

And when there's presence, that's not needed. If you speak, my suggestion would be that the first words direct people into the body so that their attention moves from the

head to a deeper level. So you lead people into the body and there may be some people who are new and who've never been in the body before.

They've for 40, 50 years, they've never been in the body. And it may be meaningless. They feel the inner body.

They say, where? Doesn't make sense. I can't work that out.

What do you mean? The easiest device getting people into the body, and I've used it a few times and it works, even for people who've never been there, is you can do this with anybody, your grandparents, your grandmother, any little child. No understanding is required.

To just say, and some of you have heard me say that before, hold up your right hand or left hand, close your eyes. Is there any way you can know without touching anything or moving your hand or opening your eyes, without any of this, is there any way you can know whether your right hand is there, still there? Is there any way you can find out without moving it, touching anything, or looking at it, whether your right hand is still there?

You ask that question. And that question will direct their attention, after a little while, into the inner feeling of right hand. So it'll take their attention.

First, they'll try to work out mentally. Is there any way I can know? And then you ask that question again.

Perhaps you can find out. And so the attention then, for some people, it's a revelation. For the first time, they can feel that something in the body is alive and they feel, yes, there's a subtle sense of aliveness where my right hand is.

And they feel a very subtle flow of aliveness there. And then you will point out, right, you've entered the body. That's the beginning of it.

And that is, for some people, it's a beautiful revelation. And they are surprised that there is actually aliveness there. They had never even thought that there could be aliveness in the body.

They might have been concerned with their external physical body and how it looks, but never felt a deep inner aliveness there. And there it is. And then, so you can see if you can do it with the other hand, find out if that's still there.

Oh, that can then help work more quickly. And then bring the two together into one feeling, feel them both at the same time. Oh, and at first, it works beautifully.

And the strange thing is, feeling your hands immediately sensitizes you more to feeling other parts of the body, even if they're not specifically pointed out. So by entering your

hands, through your hands, you could be the entry point. It's very easily felt for most people.

Already there's greater aliveness, even in those parts that are not specifically addressed yet. And particularly, if you've done this for a while, you can enter the body from anywhere and suddenly the aliveness is there all over. You can use any entry point.

And so that is for, this is a beautiful thing you can do for people who come and then gradually take them into the rest of the body and feel it. Can you sense also that your feet are equally alive? Equally.

And so gradually develop this ability to sense different parts of the body as one. There was a teacher called Jean Klein, who I believe he used that expression, a global sense of beingness or aliveness, global presence, meaning all over. And a few pointers are then needed to point out the significance of feeling the inner body, because otherwise the mind will dismiss it and say, this is not important.

Yes, it feels good, but I've got other things to worry about. So if it's not understood, the mind needs a little bit of understanding, then it's easier to see why, what is the significance of being in the body? And so you explain the vast intelligence that undoubtedly is in the body, in every cell, in every organ, in the DNA, so vast that no human mind and not all the computers put together could coordinate the functions of the body, not even a tiny percentage of it.

So you are connecting with an intelligence that is greater than what you had thought of as intelligence, which is just the human mind, not separate from it, but vaster. So the vastness begins by entering what looks like this limited little thing, the body, but it is only the doorway. So the entry point into that vastness is through that doorway and realize you're now connecting with that greater intelligence that dwells in there.

And you can also point out that you may notice that when you sense the inner body, less thinking is taking place in your mind, because you cannot simultaneously be in your body and have a lot of thought activity in your head. Because your consciousness is either consumed by thought, in which case consciousness continuously is being born into forms, or you can have your consciousness, instead of going out into form, returning back into the formless and the formless one life, one consciousness of which the mind is only an expression. So it's a reversal.

So you point out, people will notice that the mind becomes stiller as you enter the body. And people are not becoming less intelligent, but more intelligent because they connect with that greater intelligence, that vastness. And you just need to point that out that it is also the beginning of the inner realm of stillness as they enter within, out of which all great creations have come in this world.

Artists, some of the creative scientists, all created out of the decisive moments of realization were always stillness, preceded by stillness. And probably an aliveness in the body, even if they didn't know it, they were sitting there. That is the creative state of total openness and receptivity.

Boredom, there's no such thing in that state. Boredom is the mind trying to look for the next thing and not finding it. That's boredom.

Boredom means you're in your mind. If you're sitting here and you're bored, it's a clear indication you're in your mind. There's nothing wrong with that, just know it.

Because sitting here is not boring, but it's boring because this vital aliveness to this gathering. But if you cannot feel your body as you sit here, you'll be bored. There's not enough for the mind.

And the same, also that when people come to a gathering to point out what boredom is, because the mind can easily become bored in a gathering. And to point, what does that mean? Boredom means the mind is looking for the next thing to get born into, identification with the next thought or the next external interesting thing or the next thing it could react to.

And so be born, it seeks rebirth in Buddhist terms. The mind seeks continuously to be reborn into some new form. And that could be a reaction.

Okay, that's the egoic mind. Or it could be a thought it identifies with, which is where I'm going to be tomorrow. You flow into that.

Reaction's our favorite one, of course. It's a strong rebirth. Every time you react, it's a very powerful rebirth of me.

So the mind seeks that continuous rebirth. Or it could be an emotion that you identify with as me. That happens.

And it could be anger or heaviness. And it becomes, you're born into, you identify with that, it becomes personalized. It's a me.

It fuels further thought, which more form identity. And so if you point those simple things out that enable people to become aware of their basic inner processes, and this has to not just be pointed out once because the mind will forget it, obscure it, and maybe not even listen. Almost at every meeting, you may need to point out what the mind tends to do.

At this very moment, you may be in a state of boredom. You may be in a state of restlessness. And if it is, if it's the case, simply to observe that.

What does it mean? You're in the mind and looking for another birth. Maybe you already

found another birth.

You found something to react to right here and now, in which case, congratulations, you achieved another rebirth into a stronger sense of me through the reactive force. Great, it worked again. And that is the deeper meaning.

In Buddhism, in popular Buddhism, when they talk about the end of rebirth, they think it's a grand, it's a cosmic thing that you finally achieve, perhaps in 2,000 years time, or another 100 incarnations, when you finally achieve the state in which you will no longer be reborn with the deeper meaning of that is immediate, to recognize the deeper meaning of rebirth, identification with form. So rebirth happens at this moment. And you're seeking rebirth at this moment.

And freedom from rebirth is possible at this moment. Now, this is the essence of truth, and it can be pointed out very simply. You may have to do it every time people come, because the mind will forget it and deny it.

Oh, yes. And then you can watch that process in yourself. And as you teach, you learn.

It deepens in yourself, because learning and teaching are not really two. You teach and you learn at the same time. That's the beauty, because you're not ultimately separate from those beings.

It is a single process, teaching and learning. What comes out of my mouth is always determined by the energy field of the group. If the group didn't draw it out of this form, nothing would happen.

And sometimes what comes out of the mouth varies. It depends on the collective field of the group. This form is not separate from those forms.

It's one. The ancient saying, the teacher and the torch together produce the teaching. It is not, and again, not falling into the illusion that you, that you personalize your function, the function of this form, and you personalize that, and then you see yourself as a teacher.

Then you get trapped again. There's a new rebirth of me in the head and an image identity of me in the head, and you have now become a teacher. Congratulations.

Another rebirth. It worked again. And that is a subtle trap for people.

Anybody who temporarily performs the function of facilitating that, you identify with the function and it becomes another self sense of self. And then in a very subtle sense, you feel that you are teaching and then you're walking to the supermarket and you're no longer a simple human. You are now a spiritual teacher.

And you carry that around with you. And if you become very successful as a spiritual

teacher, then other people will project a form identity onto you. Because truth flows through the form, so they perceive the form as special.

Not realizing that truth is one and it's equally in everyone. It's only a question of to what extent it is obscured. That's all.

But there's an equal amount of truth in everyone. And as I put it last week at the retreat, nobody is closer to God than you are. And the illusion that somebody else is closer to God is another egoic illusion.

So that's a beautiful realization. But if you become successful, and you may, because there's an enormous longing for truth now. And before you know it, there may have been a great opening in you and suddenly truth flows through you.

You emanated as peace and aliveness and presence. And the words that you speak come out of that also. And then, of course, the beautiful thing is challenges always come.

Then your challenge is, people will project an image of you. For a while, you keep yourself clear of images. You remain in the state of openness.

And the moment people leave, you're not a spiritual teacher anymore. It's only a function, not an identity that you carry around. So when you go to the supermarket, you go as simply a field of presence, walking, floating, looking at the shelves.

That's no, you don't carry the burden of an identity, but people will project the identity. The more successful you become as a teacher, so to speak, the more powerful the teaching is. That means people will project some form identity onto you and you get bombarded by that, perhaps.

And after a few years or a few months, suddenly you are somebody again. It's happened to some teachers. You can sometimes see in some teachers, even the change from the earlier photos, where they are so simple, and the later photos when they've become successful gurus.

And that can happen quickly these days because there's such, so much coming through now. So before you know it, some of you could have turned into gurus. And so that's another beautiful challenge to recognize the projections of a form identity, not to hang on so that the openness remains.

That's, on one hand, you may never feel ready to teach the truth. The mind says, no, I'm not ready yet. Not yet.

I'll just wait a bit more. I'm not ready yet. And you'll never feel ready.

That is one movement of the mind. Not good enough. I'm not good enough yet.

Don't know enough yet. What am I going to tell them? I don't know that much.

You hardly need to know anything. There were some very great spiritual teachers who knew almost nothing on the level of knowledge. And even Jesus, each person in this room, I'm sure is more highly educated than Jesus was.

It's obvious. There wasn't that much knowledge around at the time. And according to all accounts, wasn't even highly educated, even according to the standards of the time.

You don't need more knowledge. That's for sure to become a teacher. But the mind will say, I don't know enough yet.

I need to know a bit more to be effective as an instrument for transformation. This form becomes an instrument for the transformation of consciousness to be effective. That does not depend on adding anything more to yourself.

In any realm or dimension, it is not an adding to who you are. Neither knowledge nor great firework spiritual experiences that come and go, but that you could remember and then add to that. Or just life experience, even that don't need.

It's not an adding. It's that the truth is already shining as the stillness that is underneath thought. The sun is already there.

What can you add to that? Nothing. So it is not true that you need to acquire anything more to become an effective instrument of transformation.

So one movement of the mind says, no, I just need to wait. There may be another movement of the mind that says, I really want to be a spiritual teacher. At the same time, it says, but I'm not quite ready yet, or maybe I'm ready now.

Again, the desire to be a spiritual teacher. Oh, there was one master who announced he already had followers and said, I've detected in myself a desire to be a spiritual teacher. So I've stopped.

I'm dissolving our group, our gathering. This is it, go home. So it's a very subtle thing.

But on the one hand, you never feel ready, not good enough, wanting to be great and good. I want to become that. Nothing is needed.

No further understanding is necessary to be effective. No further understanding, of course, in miracles goes so far as to say, there's nothing that you need to understand. And it says, your understanding is not a powerful contribution to the truth.

So what is it then? It is simply the state of presence. And you don't need to understand more to be present.

It's a letting go of even what you think you knew. And then the opening is there. Now, I've heard from some people who teach and they already become an instrument for transformation.

But occasionally in their private lives, they get drawn back into rebirth. They are reborn into reactivity. They are reborn into a mental image.

They are reborn into identification with their pain body. They are reborn into identification with mental noise and the heavy me. And then they think, oh, I must be a fraud, because I'm obviously not living it.

There I am. And then here I am. I'm not living it.

I must be a fraud. And somebody that comes to your gathering may even catch you. In a state of rebirth.

And say, oh, I thought you were free of that. Shouldn't you be free of that? You can still be effective as a teacher, even if your entire life is not yet an expression, 100% expression of absolute continuous presence.

It's not a requirement. You would have to wait a long time. But what will happen is that the moments of rebirth will be shorter.

They will not be a long, drawn-out rebirth, like hanging on to one reaction, to one belief structure or pattern. Or one emotion. Hang on.

It goes on and on. It'll be short. You will find shorter and shorter rebirth.

And again, not creating. Again, because the egoic thing is so subtle. It comes in.

You've discovered. You've seen how it works there. And then it comes in from here.

You've just looked at egoic mind structure there. Oh, I see it so clearly. And there it is.

I read the other day this beautiful joke about there's a priest and a rabbi praying in the holy city of Jerusalem. And the rabbi is overcome by the presence of God. And he falls to his knees and shouts, There's only God.

I am nobody. And the priest suddenly is also overcome by the presence of God. And the priest also shouts, Yes, there's nobody.

I am nobody. And a few steps away, a street sweeper stops sweeping the street and looks at them. And the street sweeper also falls to his knees and shouts, I am nobody.

And the priest looks at the rabbi and says, Look who thinks he's nobody. That's how cunning the ego is. But some people who have gatherings engage in prolonged eye contact with people called gazing.

Some people love it. Other people think it's weird. And you can turn off many people who first come to you if you do that.

So what is the significance of gazing? And is it necessary? Or what does it do?

Well, in some groups, it becomes an automatic thing. Whenever you meet somebody, you feel almost compelled to gaze. And if the perception of the other person happens in the field of stillness, in other words, while you're gazing, there's no thought arising.

That is quite a beautiful, actually a transmission of presence, but maybe you don't feel it. I am giving you presence. And yet, first of all, it is a transmission, but it awakens presence in the other because you look through the mental emotional screen in the other person.

You're not even interested. Even if you could read their minds while you look, some people can. You wouldn't because it's not that interesting.

It's like listening to gossip. You might listen, you might put your ear to the door, there are people next door gossiping. And then after a while, at first it sounds, you realize it's not really that interesting.

And so the human mind isn't really that interesting. So you look through that. And there's a deeper connection that is a deep knowing of the other person, and you might not even know their name or their history.

And you know the other person more deeply. Nothing that you would know about this form could add to the depth of knowing, and that knowing is beyond the mind. And that knowing is not separate from the state of connectedness, that is love in the highest sense, not the egoic love.

And that is the true meaning of gazing, is there is presence flowing between you. And even if the other person's mind is not still, and it may not be, it is enough if one person's mind is still and the gazing happens, and there's simply presence, complete stillness flowing through. And that awakens that in the other, or one could say almost it draws it out, something responds.

Now, that's a beautiful thing. When it happens, and it happens spontaneously, not necessarily as something that you always feel you need to do it, it happens when the moment is right. And gazing can be not necessarily so prolonged even that it becomes noticeable.

I pointed out last night, you can gaze at the shopkeeper or the supermarket cashier while you hand over your money, and all that it means is there's stillness. There's complete presence in this moment, and there's a field of stillness in which the perception happens, but in which also that connection happens, a deep inner connection. And it's

unlikely that the shopkeeper or the supermarket cashier will be aware of that on a conscious level.

He or she may just feel good about you and feel you're such a nice person, or feel good about him or herself for a moment. Or there may be so much mental noise that even that they can't feel, and that's fine too. And yet, there's always something that happens within through bringing thoughtless awareness into your perceptions.

That's teaching. Really, that is the essence and core of teaching, is you bring thoughtless awareness into whatever you perceive around you. That is the deeper meaning of, there's a Course in Miracles lesson which says, my holiness envelops the world.

And the word my here goes beyond a personalized existence, personalized sense of self, to realize that, yes, that is a sacred space that we share at this moment. It is a sacred space. And our encounter is a sacred encounter.

If that were all you knew and that were all that you're teaching ever were, to realize that every encounter is sacred with another human being, that would be enough to transform the world if you just knew that every moment. But you cannot know it as a mental belief. There needs to be the reality of sacredness, not just the belief that it's sacred, it's nice to believe it.

If you only believe it, it's not enough to live it, to have a mental belief that it's sacred and you'll get drawn into reactivity five minutes later. But to hold that spaciousness of presence. And then gazing can be powerful.

And at some point you may have to explain if people come to you what the significance of it is, and the stillness that is the essence of gazing. But the most beautiful gazing happens when it's spontaneous and the other person doesn't even notice it as gazing, and you're not doing anything, it just happens. It basically happens with me whenever I'm with someone, whether I know them or not, names I forget very quickly.

And yet there's always a deep sense of knowing, even if I've never seen them before, a deep sense of connectedness beyond the story of the person or the idiosyncrasies of that particular form. That's only a temporary formation, a deep, and that is love. And that is what transforms the world, just knowing that.

So be careful with in groups so that it doesn't become automatic. People get turned off by it. You do it at first, it may happen just a few moments, and then at some point you may explain what it means.

Many people find eye contact threatening, and they believe that you're thinking something about them while you're looking, or they're afraid they could read their minds. Gazing at a human is exactly the same as looking at a flower in the state of thoughtless presence, which the flower responds to too, but you don't know that. The

flower loves it just as the human loves it.

All of nature loves it to be recognized in their essence. Each form of life to be recognized in their essence is to be recognized in their essence. That really is you're saving the world, and to use an old-fashioned expression in that way.

Each form ultimately, through your recognition, recognizes itself. Two people gazing at each other, and both of them engaged in mind activity, doesn't do very much. But it's a beautiful thing for people who live together.

Partners, occasionally, to just sit and be and look at each other, and perhaps be in the body, and become still, and then look. That's also the state of listening. The state of gazing is the same state as the state of open, completely non-judgmental listening.

We may talk about that in the afternoon, when you're with one person, to be in that state of... Again, the sense perception, when you look, it's visual. When you listen to what the other person is saying, auditory sense perception, the sense perception is happening in and through a field of stillness.

That's teaching. What do you need to know in that? It's happening in and through stillness.

You look through the stillness. You listen through the stillness. It is being received by the stillness.

It is known, but not conceptually. You know, but from the point of view of the mind, you don't know anything anymore. You bring the greater intelligence to your perceptions.

The next step in groups is when people share. This is both a beautiful thing, they talk about their experiences of how presence, how they were present or not present in certain situations, or how they can bring presence into a certain situation. And that's a beautiful thing and requires very great alertness, because it is at that point where most easily the mind can take over.

And then, presence is lost and it degenerates into people expressing their positions. Or one people trying to tell somebody else what's right. You should, or whatever.

Or getting drawn into a story. You will have, perhaps, already have some experiences of that. A little helpful hint here, because you may find yourself speaking too, you contribute.

And you can point out to the others in the group also this little hint, that whenever they have expressed what they want to say, a thought movement to step back, take one or two steps back, so to speak, internally, and step away from that thought movement. Let it come to an end and step back into simply an alert beingness or presence. Otherwise,

thought proliferates and you can find in a group that the collective thought suddenly goes, and all you have, the whole group is then being dragged along in thought streams, opinions, and this and that.

Sometimes you can see it in one person. It can happen, people who talk and talk, and one thought leads to another and another. No gap.

So when you have expressed a thought, not to continue in the stream of thought, to step out, you've said what you have to say, and then you step out of the thought. Your attention relinquishes the thought back into presence. So you don't hang on to that incarnation for longer than necessary.

And stepping out, always back into stillness, back into presence. After a thought stream is to notice the ending of thought streams is very important so that they don't proliferate, that is, mind. So because when you start speaking, this is a great challenge.

When you start speaking to another person, a group, shares this or that, words come, mind comes. So to then not lose the field of presence requires you not to get drawn into a mind stream, so you can always step back and out. And the ability of, you can point out to people also, they can do that also, so that they don't get dragged along by their mind stream.

And the ability of people, while one person is speaking, the ability of all others present to listen in a completely open and receptive way. And not to immediately counteract or react mentally to what that person is saying. And while that person is speaking, you're already formulating, which is a normal way, you're already formulating in your mind what you are going to say.

And you can see it when it happens in people, while they're listening to you, they have 20% of their attention on what you are saying, and 80% of their attention is in their thought processes. They're going to come out of your mouth in a second, and they're now being prepared. And your sense of self is in, of course, is in, that's what really matters, is in here, to you.

I say 20%, sometimes they're just peripherally aware of what you're saying, because what they're really waiting for is to tell you what they're preparing in the head, their position. And of course, there's the famous words between partners, you're not listening to me. Why don't you listen?

Because the inability to listen is widespread. And you can notice it even here, maybe, I don't know, maybe we'll talk again at lunchtime, maybe we won't. Somebody talks, and perhaps you can be a bit more aware of these processes that happen.

Is it possible to listen to the other person in spaciousness? With no thought being, no answer being prepared in your head. But then, of course, the mind created self feels less

through that, because if no answer comes, I seem to be shrinking.

I need to put forward my viewpoint, my, and that I am somebody through that, I am someone. So I stand out, I have an opinion, I know better, I exist. Exist means to stand out, ex out, you're coming out of yourself.

And not to be in that state is, I'm disappearing. What am I going to say next? I don't know, maybe there's nothing to say.

And you may be surprised that sometimes when you haven't prepared anything, after a moment of stillness, something may come out of your mouth, and it may be much more powerful than anything that could have come if it had been prepared mentally. It may be more simple, too. But you get challenged by minds, the human mind, the collective human mind coming to you in the form of human beings, persons, and that is the challenge, whether it's in a teaching situation or in personal relationships, it's always the same challenge of the mind form pretending that it is absolutely important, that something in the mental realm is absolutely important.

My viewpoint, my position, this, this, give me, and build, raise belief that this matters. And so the spaciousness around it is lost. Well, it's not lost, but you don't know it's there.

The spaciousness around thought. Once you know the spaciousness around thought, you can even play with thought. You can say, I'm a Democrat, I'm a Republican, or whatever it is in Canada.

I can never get Canadian politics. I don't understand. It's complicated.

But Democrats, Republican is simple. Oh, yes. Identification with that.

You can have a preference. Maybe you thought that Al Gore would have been a better president than George Bush. You may be right, but you may be wrong.

Who knows? As Byron Katie says, do you really know this to be true? So the essence we've just spoken about of having groups.

The rest is, once you know the essence, that's all that's needed. The rest is how you do it in the world of form varies from group to group and person to person. If there are any, if you have groups, and here this morning, but it's just mainly addressed groups, if you have gatherings at home, if there's anything you want to contribute, you can either say what, you may have a question concerning one or two aspects of it, or you may have learned something there, something you did first, and then you learned, and it could help others to say what it is that you learned, what before you did it in this way, and then that didn't work, and then you did something else, or anything to do with groups. Some people have, before we open for questions, little cards, and you read, you know, these new age cards, but some people have cards with the power of now teachings, or

something, and that is nice.

A person takes a card, and that's, then you have, it's a thought, of course, but the thought always points beyond itself. Then you read the thought, and you have a stillness around it. That's a beautiful pointer, each person taking a card, and, because some of it may yet be beyond a person's own experience, and so reactive reactivity comes in, but there's no need to be afraid of it.

Why not let people react, and hold that space? It's quite good to occasionally to be challenged, and that's the essence of why this person was there, is to learn that there is another dimension, and so the card actually pointed to the essence, but the little mind made self got frightened. Yes, so you may encounter, this is interesting, sometimes people can get angry, the pain body can get triggered in a gathering, and that's a beautiful challenge.

What is possible, then, that the whole group energy can become turbulent, and everybody gets pulled into pain body. So it's more likely to happen with people who are relatively new to the group, and thus they already, they know about the pain body, and they, when it comes up in them, they can be with it. They might even say at this very moment, my pain body has been triggered, and that it's being, there's a spaciousness around it when they point it out, and that's beautiful.

So as quickly as possible to explain certain things to people who are relatively new. I often do that in large groups, when I point out that some of you may experience, while you sit here, you may experience sudden restlessness. You may experience your pain body coming up.

You may experience strong mind movements. Point out the obstacles that may come up for them. You may experience boredom, as you sit here.

If they don't know it, they identify with the boredom, and then they can see inner states arising, and in the seeing, there's a spaciousness around inner states. So it's good, maybe a few basic points, when new people come, explain them what could happen here, how reactions that may come, and when they come, to be aware that that's what it is. It's a reaction, and it's good to be reminded, the group, you cannot be reminded often enough of those things.

As you sit here, you explain briefly what the pain body is that may come up. You explain the egoic entity, the me, with its identifications. You don't need at this point necessarily to use the respiration rebirth.

For some people that sounds too esoteric. And it also can happen, and you may have, once the group has a certain size, life does things in such a way that there always often be one person in the group that's difficult. There's always someone who's difficult.

And that could be a great teacher, that difficult person for everybody, to hold a spaciousness around that difficult person. Sometimes people who almost despise themselves feel drawn, it's almost as if they didn't want to be there, but yet they are there. Because the personality doesn't want to be there, but something deeper draws them there.

I had an extreme case of that, a woman in London I knew, with a very strong ego, and she would go to all spiritual teachers. Whenever there was a new spiritual teacher in town, she would be there, and she would always sit, and she said to me, I've seen them all, and I laugh at them all, but there was something deeper that she couldn't keep away. Her mind condemned the teachers, she always immediately found something to condemn, whatever it was, and yet she couldn't keep away.

It's beautiful to see. So let's see if there's anything, any questions that arise from groups, or something that you have already learned, or any difficulties you've experienced.

[Speaker 5] (2:33:55 - 2:36:19)

One of the things that John and I do together is we lead a non-denominational worship service at the county jail every week, and most of the men that are drawn to this are from a more fundamental Christian perspective, even though we bring in Buddhists and Taoist teachings and so forth, but they have a fairly simple faith, and so part of what we are concerned with is honoring where they are, because most of them it's their faith that has caused them to say, I can live in this world in a different way.

But I learned something very profound from two of these men. One was, he had just had a born-again experience, and he was, he just saw truth in a very narrow way, and I think he needed to, because that was the way he was making a choice. And I was trying to just come from presence in every experience with him, and be open-hearted, and one night he was really preaching kind of hard, and I was concerned, my mind became concerned that the rest of the men in the group would be having a problem with this, because some of them look kind of confused, and so I began trying to give him a broader perspective of truth.

And he was crushed that he had done something wrong, and I realized that this had not come from a place of presence in me. And then there's another young man who revealed that he sees himself as a channel for a new way of looking at the truth, and he speaks in a very authoritative way, and it was of some concern to me, because the other men were really confused. He was out there from a different place, and yet I was able to keep coming back to presence, and coming back to presence, and so one night John wasn't there.

He was away, and I was able to come back into a place of presence with it, and one of the other men asked a very innocent, simple question that just changed the whole

energy. And this one young man said, oh no, this is just what I believe. This isn't something that I know to be the truth.

And it shifted the whole energy, and what I learned from that is that my job as a facilitator was to keep coming back to presence, and to allow presence to lead the service.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:19 - 2:48:21)

Yes, yes, that's very good. The moment, as you say, everything shifted, the moment he was no longer identified with what his mind was saying, no longer identified, and that is what I sometimes call the spaciousness around thought. He was no longer in the thought.

Suddenly he recognized, this is just what I believe. And the spaciousness, and that is immediately the shift in the whole energy field changes when it moves out of mind identification. And the teacher, the facilitator, whatever you want to call it, the function is never to tell anybody that they're wrong.

But to be there as the spaciousness around whatever they're saying. And never to attack the mental position. Some teachers do it, a few.

There are some spiritual teachers who are confrontational. What they do is, it looks as if they were attacking you, challenging you. Of course, what they're attacking is your mind identification, the egoic me entity, and they want to attack it in order to crack it open, so that then something deeper is revealed.

Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. It's not my way. So there are certain people who are drawn to those teachers who are confrontational and who attack the unconsciousness.

I have never done that. But sometimes that may work for certain people in certain cases. It is not something I would recommend that you do.

Because it can easily also strengthen the unconsciousness. Because by attacking it, you have made it real. You've given it reality.

And you could strengthen it. It could go either way when the teaching is confrontational. You can get through the ego, cut through it, or you can strengthen it.

So it's a little risky. There's another way that is not attack, and yet is a very clear cutting through mind. Cutting through.

And there's this teacher, Byron Katie, she does that. She simply cuts whatever the mind produces as a belief. She questions that.

Can you know that to be true? And you see, after a few seconds, you see the relativity of everything the mind throws up. So it's always, the mind is always seen as not absolute.

Nothing the mind produces is absolutely true. And so you cut, she cuts through but not confrontational, more gently. So there is a, it is an old, it is a tradition of confrontational teaching has existed for some centuries.

To some extent, Zen has a little bit of that, the fierceness of the Zen teacher. But I would not recommend it unless that is your nature, and unless that's what you do, and unless that is how, then you will draw to you perhaps people who need you, who need that. What works most powerfully, I find, is to give no reality to the unconsciousness, which is mind identification, mind stuff, to look through that.

And that implies also not to believe that there's any human being that needs fixing, that needs to be fixed, put right. There's something wrong with you, I know what it is, and I'm going to put you right, is a very common egoic perspective. I can change you, I know what's wrong with you.

Who is the you that you see something wrong with? Who is that you that you want to fix? An egoic entity, how could you fix that?

The beautiful thing is that humans don't need to be, to realize that humans don't need to be fixed. Because every human being living in this world, to a greater or lesser degree, except those few already completely free, they all express to a lesser or greater degree human unconsciousness, that's all. That's what needs to be fixed, but it can't be fixed.

It can only be recognized, primarily in yourself, and transcended in yourself. That's what the world needs. And not to make an identity out of human unconsciousness, in whatever way it expresses itself, to make an identity out of that for the other person.

That is the core, and if a teacher attacks the egoic entity, temporarily he is making it real. There's nothing there to be, it's an illusion anyway. But generally speaking, not to mistake human unconsciousness for the reality of that human being, and the expression of unconsciousness.

And sometimes the extreme case is, people may do something deeply unconscious, motivated by deep unconsciousness, which is the same unconsciousness that is in everyone, just a more extreme manifestation of it, it varies in degree, and there's no person in that, it's just degrees of unconsciousness, and it's not even those who express unconsciousness in greater degrees are less worthy, or less likely to become free, they may be more likely to become free, because they suffer more.

I had recently, some people came to me, and their son had perpetrated a dreadful crime, killed several people, 18-year-olds, 18-year-old, and they saw something that the whole world had created, out of that, what he did, in deep unconsciousness, the whole world

had created, of course, that's what the world does, an identity for that person. He is a murderer, even mass murderer, he's killed four people. And they say, if they could only see what is, we know what is there underneath all that, we've seen it, but nobody else can see it anymore, if they could only see what we see in him.

Of course, they were in deep suffering, it's an extreme challenge, and I pointed out that that is not who he is, and they knew it, but they were becoming, there was in them a conflict between what the world was saying, who he is, and who deeply they knew who he is, and they were almost beginning to believe, but it was too painful to believe, that the world was right about him, there was that, and so I pointed out, that is, don't make an identity out of that for other people, or for yourself, if there's anything that you did through unconsciousness in the past, create a strength and sense of self through that, and that's called guilt, and that's a favorite egoic device, to keep a false sense of self going through guilt, which derives a sense of self from something that I now condemn, that I now see as bad, and I did that, that was me, I did that, I, I must be very bad, I failed, I, you derive through mind activity that is focused on that event that was an expression of human unconsciousness, you create a continued strong sense of me around it, that's why the ego loves guilt, that's why the ego doesn't want to let go of guilt, although it's so painful, guilt means you identify with unconsciousness, and make it into a self, a me, and if you do it for somebody else, then it's called blame, you did that, that is who you are, it's exactly the same movement, and so it's being trapped in a false identity, and to see that, in extreme cases, it's not easy, some, some people, unconsciousness, they embody human unconsciousness to such an extreme that it seems hard to, not to create an identity for them out of that, but the essence of so-called forgiveness, of course, simply means to realize that that is not who they are, that's forgiveness, as long as you think you did that, that is you did that, you, you, or I did that, I, I, still trapped in an egoic identity, you make it for another person, or you make it for yourself, if you make it for yourself, you'll make it for others, if you make it for others, you're also, you're yourself trapped in it, it's amazing, so not whatever people come up with, you may, sometimes coming back now to groups, it can happen that in groups, a few people can get hijacked by a strong mind movement, as perhaps that person temporarily got hijacked when he suddenly expressed his viewpoint, and in, and they believe it's God speaking through them, or they believe it's presence speaking through them, and yet you can always feel the vibrational field around what they are saying, when it comes from an egoic mind, there's a harshness about it, there's always something intolerant, something that condemns, something that says, I am right, and they are wrong, that identifies that the position of rightness, those are all characteristics of mind-induced, ego-induced speech, they're even channelings, it might happen to you that you have a group, and suddenly somebody starts channeling, and says, I am here, this is so-and-so, and some channelings are beautiful, some channelings come from a very deep level of truth, other channelings come from the egoic mind, pretending to be big and important, and don't you dare question me, I am whoever, from that planet, and

I'm evolved, I'm 5,000 years old, how could you ever question me? But once you know, you can easily feel where, what's the, what, where it is coming from, I'm not telling you what to do if somebody starts channeling, it turns out to be an egoic channel, you know what to do in that moment, maybe you just say, thank you, thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:22 - 2:48:28)

We've had, been through a couple of cycles, but there's two things that, that I wanted to say this moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:48:29 - 2:48:29)

That's your group.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:30 - 2:51:12)

The group, yes, no channelers. One of the things, one we solved pretty well, I think, by having, I've been moderating our group for a couple years now, and initially, especially after you had come to town, and there was quite a bit of interest, we had, you know, 20, 30 people sometimes come, and what I found was that there, especially many of these people were, had been in therapy, or therapy groups, or been kind of new age thinkers and stuff, and so they, they had their rap down, you know, and one of the first things I learned to do, and at that point it was very instinctual, I only understood what I did afterwards, but, was when people started to do their story. Our routine would be to listen to some tape of yours, and then we'd talk a little bit. The idea would be to talk about where people are having trouble being present, and where they're having successes, like you were saying earlier, and then we would listen to some tape again.

So we would set up the presence through the tape, at least ideally that was the idea, but we'd often have these new people would come in, and they would sort of recognize this group as something familiar to them, and they would kind of go into their routine of, this is my story, and of course, we weren't very interested in the story. So by having, by being a fairly strong moderator, I would just bring them back to how is presence difficult for you to achieve, or what successes have you had, and kind of bring them. So I felt we successfully handled that particular diversion that the group kind of always wanted to go towards, and tell people, especially with new people.

The second problem that I don't think I ever really resolved very well, was when people come who've read a lot of conversations with God, or sometimes Course in Miracles, or some of these other chanted entities that are very popular in certain groups, especially in sort of new agey stuff. And then someone would be speaking about a problem of presence that they would have, say for example, and then another person who had all this other background, would start trying to address that person's issue about presence with a lot of complex techniques or ideas that came out of these other sources that I

would consider to be less simple, less pure. Those situations, I don't know that I ever really adequately resolved them, or dealt with them, because it's very hard as a moderator to ask someone, well, let's not talk about that.

And so what would happen would be, if I did say something, frequently it would antagonize the person who was speaking. If I didn't say something, it would inject into the group all this stuff that was very far away from your teaching. And what we were trying to stay focused on, of course, was that.

That's one I never really adequately resolved. Do you have any answers?

[Speaker 1] (2:51:16 - 2:55:40)

That's what I mentioned earlier, how the mind can take over easily in a group setting. Have you ever pointed, in general terms, pointed out to the group that it's not about explanations, but the essence of that group is, so that each person understands? And you may have to point out what the essence of that gathering is at the beginning of each gathering.

That could be the starting point, and it's often still the starting point when I have retreats or talks. That question often is the beginning, why are we here? So to be reminded is very helpful.

And then you're present and you explain the state of consciousness that is presence. That's the reason why we're here, not to find or to get involved in new theories or new explanations or new beliefs, whatever it is, that state of consciousness. And once you have reminded people at the beginning, then they would be more likely to accept if you remind them again in the middle, or something happens.

To bring people back to presence, once you have observed a proliferation of mind in the group, you could even have an established signal. If it's an established signal, then people won't take it personally. But whatever it may be, let's come back to a presence, or that.

That could be misinterpreted as if you were telling somebody off, but that of course is the Zen master saying, be here now, attention now, awake now. That would be mine if I had a little group. I do use it still sometimes.

So a little sign to bring the group back to presence. And if you do that, perhaps, even if the group is not necessarily being taken over by some big mental theory, but even when there's simple sharing, bring back people to know this, feel the body. Help them to step out of mind streams that I mentioned earlier, the stepping back, the stepping out.

Always, of course, you have to do it for yourself, too. You step out. Then explain those basic points that are especially important in groups.

The stepping back from a mind stream, the ending, observing the ending of a mind stream, a statement, which is still rare. Then a different quality comes into the interaction, even the verbal interaction, when it's always stepping back. You've said what you have to say, and then others will get it, too.

Otherwise, you become a, it's just a minor version of those people that we've all met who go on and on. But that's the mind. That's the human mind.

There was a novel by an Irishman in the 20s. It goes on for 50 or 60 pages or something without punctuation, without a period. And it's called Stream of Consciousness, but it's really Stream of Mind.

The satirical magazine in England called Private Eye has a regular column in each issue, which is entitled Great Bores of Today. And each time, it's a mind stream. It's like sometimes it's a taxi driver or it's a politician.

So the taxi driver starts with, well, if you ask me, and then he goes on. And there's no end to it. And at the end, there's three dots to imply that he's carrying on even there.

[Speaker 8] (2:55:48 - 2:57:05)

First of all, I want to thank you for this incredible opportunity to be here. And already, I can feel myself just dropping back into myself within a day or so, and it's quite wonderful. The question I have is around this recent act of terrorism in regard to running groups and being with my individual clients.

And what has come up for me around that is that everyone has such a strong story about it. And of course, it has activated everyone's pain body, I think, certainly including my own. Although being here again, just dropping back, it's more silence around it, which is a miracle.

But because usually I haven't found my own pain body activated in the same way my clients are, so I've had more of an emotional distance. And I'm not sure exactly what I'm asking, except perhaps maybe you can lend some perspective about how to be with such extraordinary circumstances when the collective pain body has gotten so highly activated and our mind tends to get very agitated around that.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:05 - 3:24:11)

Yes, thank you. Yes, thank you. Of course, that's one more chapter in the history of human madness and pain inflicted by humans on other humans and on themselves.

It's a continuation of 20th century history and all the centuries beyond. The same mind set has produced it that reduces another human being or groups of human beings to mere concepts in the head. And once you have reduced their aliveness to a mere

concept in the head, you can inflict pain and you don't know that you're doing it anymore.

You no longer know their aliveness or your aliveness. It's being trapped completely in a conceptualized reality that speaks of the Americans, the Jews, the blacks, the this, the that. You can do it to groups of people.

You can do it to an individual person. Call that person this or that. Once you have reduced a person to a mental concept, you no longer know what you're doing to them.

You've already done the worst thing that you could do to them. You've removed their aliveness. Of course, you've trapped yourself more deeply also, but that lies at the root.

And then it is easier for the accumulated human pain that some people carry in stronger measure than others to move into the mind. And so the madness of having an egoic identity that finds its strength through creating enemies, conceptualizes groups of people, labels them as the enemy. And then that is used by the enormous amount of pain and ultimately madness.

And anything can happen then. It uses those mind structures. But first, before the pain body can become an insane terrorist, manifest as an insane terrorist, certain things need to happen in the mind of the insane terrorist.

As long as he realizes that those are human beings, the pain body cannot control this being. But the moment he reduces the human beings to mere concepts and ciphers and labels, then the pain body can move through and use those mind structures. And then a very insane entity is suddenly there that wants to destruction.

It wants more pain, which was every pain body wants. It's more pain for myself and others. It wants that destruction.

So to see what lies at the root, but see that it is common to the human mind, to do that is a tendency that each person carries, if not to such an extreme, to reduce other human beings through judgments and mental labels. And that includes things when we unconscious behavior, make an identity for them out of it, and then call that person something. It's the same movement.

You may not want to kill them, but you've already covered up the sacredness of that being for yourself. You no longer know that that being is sacred because you have constructed an identity, a conceptual mental identity, and that is what you now relate to. And it's covering up the sacredness, but you cannot cover up the sacredness of another human being without losing at least some of that within yourself of knowing yourself as the sacredness also.

And that's an amazing thing to see. So that people are doing it constantly and it's a

brutal thing. And that is what the mind, it may not look brutal in its less obvious manifestations, but it is.

And it's whenever labels, Jesus, if you look at Jesus, he always, he often associated with all kinds of people that humans had labels about. And he had no labels. So he looked through and he could see the sacredness in each one.

And humans had reduced those. How can he associate with tax collectors and prostitutes and all those anti, those people? Why is he hanging out with those people?

Mary Magdalene, why is she a hooker? She's a hooker. That's not in the New Testament because it's not that brutal, but the reality of the human mind when you put a label on a person is very brutal.

That's what they actually said, but it doesn't appear in the New Testament. And he saw that suddenly the sacredness and she knew her own sacredness. But all the humans around had reduced that human being and wanted to continue to reduce that human being.

Amazing. It happens in all these different forms until, and the worst one is what we've just witnessed. But to see that they know not what they do.

That's the truth. And yet pain comes because you witness so much pain there. You witness death on a large scale.

Premature, it looks like. It's come too soon for those people. It wasn't meant to happen.

It's come too soon. That's what it looks like. There is, however, a redemptive dimension to death, whether death comes at old age or whether death comes as it seems prematurely through an accident or an act of violence.

Now, what is that redemptive quality to death? If death were totally bad, totally evil, and the most dreadful thing that there is, which often looks like that. I even read in a newspaper an article that said, death, it wasn't talking about any particular death.

I read it a few years ago. It said death is an outrage. It's one, it's almost as if you could start having street demonstrations, carrying, I'm against death.

No more death. If death were totally dreadful, we would all be in a state of continuous depression. There would be no point in anything because we are all condemned to it.

We are all condemned to death. Of course, it would be more real if you had stamped somewhere on your body your date of death. Then all you had to do is look at it.

Oh. So everybody's under a death sentence. It's true.

And it could come. Sometimes it comes after a long life, but it could come at any time. It comes when you least expect it.

If humans didn't know on a very deep level that there is more to who they are, human existence would be dreadful and it would be pointless. What is the point in doing anything? You're going to die anyway.

And joy would not be possible. You're sentenced to death. How can you be in a state of joy?

Somehow humans know there's more to death than we realize by looking at the surface phenomenon of death, which looks dreadful. A few glimpses have come to us from humans who have faced death but haven't died. They have come back either from a situation where they were extremely close to death or a situation where they actually died, so it seems, and yet only for a moment entered that realm and then came back.

Near-death experience. And a large amount, a large majority of those accounts, both people who faced the danger of imminent death but escaped, as well as people who actually seemingly entered death but came back through a near-death experience. One thing is you don't find it in all the accounts, but in a large majority, there's a strange thing that many people tell you afterwards when they survive, and that is the last few moments before imminent death, there was a shift inside them.

People report that you've had accidents but escaped, didn't die. The accident seemed unavoidable, and in that moment, the last few seconds, they experienced a state of great alertness and peace and serenity and the absence of fear. I've read many accounts of that, and they say, this is very strange, just before it happened, suddenly all fear, fear was there until the last few moments, then suddenly all fear left me when death seemed inevitable, all fear left me and there was great peace that I suddenly felt and serenity, and everything seemed to move very slowly.

And occasionally, in those cases, people took action out of that state of consciousness in which there was no longer any thought. Basically, they had already died as their psychological form identity momentarily withdrew completely as if it died. In some cases, it died completely and something emerged from beyond their psychological form identity just before the imminent physical death.

And that is always when you go beyond your psychological form identity, there's always the reality of who you are beyond form is accompanied, the realization of that is accompanied by peace and serenity and a deep sense of all is well. And they've all said that, and many people had a near-death experience, they actually saw people sitting around them weeping because they thought this person had died. And they thought, oh, why are they weeping?

This is fine. This is so peaceful. There's such aliveness here.

So even if you don't believe, because this is not, I don't want you to necessarily believe in anything, but just take those people who faced death and see the many accounts that report a shift in consciousness in the face of death. And the sudden shift from fear to deep peace, a deep peace beyond mental explanations, a deep peace, if it could speak, that would say, there is no death, all is well, but they didn't even, they didn't need that thought. There just was a deep knowing that all is well.

And so that is one aspect of the redemptive quality of death. Something opens up when the form dissolves, there is an opening. And that can happen when the psychological form dissolves of me.

Some people have died before they died. That happened to me. The psychological form of me became so painful that it self-destructed.

And there was this peace that I couldn't explain, incredible peace and aliveness. And how is that possible? What is that peace?

And the absence of fear. And that it's knowing that there is beyond, that life is not the opposite of death, knowing that life is eternal, but knowing it beyond words, knowing it directly. Death in any form has this redemptive dimension, in any form, because a small form of death is when somebody leaves you that you had closely identified with.

A small form of death is when you lose your home. A small form of death is when you lose your social position. So there are small forms of death that are to do with the psychological form.

The psychological form of me. Death in any form is a possibility, the possibility of not resisting the opening that comes when a form dissolves, whether it's a psychological form of me or a physical form. So one could even go so far as to say the most sacred thing about human life is death.

It is where the form gives way to the formless, where the formless one life can shine through, the form dissolves. That's the redemptive quality of death. So knowing that, probably many of those people who die to violent deaths, and that is just one of many violent deaths that people are dying every day.

The violent deaths that people die through traffic accidents every year, even in the United States alone, is greater, I believe, than those people who died there. And they die every day, a violent death. And it happens, there's death happening every second on the planet.

Some violent, some not. So it is always, whether it's physical death or some aspect of psychological death through some loss, something is being, instead of being added to

you, is being removed from you, from the me. You die a little bit.

And every death, even a loss, a slight loss, is a little opening. When you're faced with imminent death, it's a huge opening into who you are beyond form. A little death is a little opening.

When you're ready, even a little opening could transform you. I read of an Indian man who is now a spiritual teacher in India, and he was traveling through Canada as a young man, and he was staying in a youth hostel, and he was taking a shower, and he had left all his belongings in his room. And when he got back from the shower, all his belongings, his money and passport and everything was gone.

And that's a little death. It's not a big thing, really. And yet, he was so ready that that loss triggered an inner transformation in him, and he suddenly became extremely peaceful.

Later, he traveled back to India and became a spiritual teacher. And it's strange that such a relatively little death could trigger that in those who are ready. There's another aspect to the redemptive quality of death, and that is in those who are close to someone who goes through that, who are not personally involved in that death, but are close to somebody, close to you.

And in a way, these events of two weeks ago were close to you. They were close to everyone, almost. They were closer than even Europeans felt that these events were close to them.

So they were very close, just as close as if somebody close to you were dying or had had a violent death. And then, what is that redemptive quality that also affects those who are in the proximity of death, but not directly affected by death? You're watching these forms dissolving, as all forms must sooner or later.

So there's nothing tragic, really, in the fact that a form of life dissolves. The only tragic thing that seems to be there is that it has dissolved too soon. That's what it appears like.

It shouldn't have dissolved in that way. All these lives were not complete. They should have lived longer.

That is the mental interpretation. And yet, it happened. And it continues to happen every day.

On a smaller scale, people die premature, seemingly premature death. Others die at old age. But whenever you are in the proximity of that and watch that, and you're able to either surrender to the fact of death totally or surrender to the feelings that you have about it, which may be very sad, may be very turbulent, and you allow them to be.

I spoke to a woman last year whose son died at the age of 30 or so. Of an illness. And she was sitting with him in the hospital.

She was watching him. And that's a premature death, 30 years old. Life hardly started.

He shouldn't be dying. And she was sitting there. And at the moment of death, somehow, by grace, she was able to completely be there with him and accept there was no thought even.

And she sensed enormous sacredness in that space. And he went peacefully. And the room was filled with peace and sacredness.

And she realized at that moment that this is not a tragedy. For five or 10 minutes, he remained in that state. And then she started weeping and becoming almost hysterical, as she told me.

Then the mind came back in with its interpretation. But she was able to be there and realize the enormous sacredness as the moment a form dissolves. And especially if the form does not resist it too much.

And you don't resist it, then death is like a flower opening. And there have been a few. Some people who relinquish resistance in the face of death, actually, just before they die, a transformation happens in their face.

And it's almost a light shining through in some of them, not all. It's always just a potential. And enormous peace comes.

And we don't know how many of those who died two weeks ago violently in their last moments experienced a collapse of their form identity and an enormous influx of peace. And we've read so many accounts of people who survived and experienced that. So being aware of that death is not the ultimate tragedy.

And it comes sooner or later. It's actually the most beautiful thing, but that's hard to accept. So be with your feelings.

But when you see the redemptive dimension to death, then surrender will be easier. Surrender to this. Surrender to what you feel.

There may still be a turbulence, pain body. And with that, you die a little bit yourself. And that's how, when somebody is close to death, it might be somebody very close to you or a massive death like the one we witnessed.

Through being with that and watching that, you partake to some extent of that death. That's why you will never be the same if you spend time in the company of a dying person and are really present with that person. You will not be the same person after having witnessed, truly witnessed death.

You will be transformed also to some extent. You've died a little bit with it. Now a strange thing, also another observation that people made is in New York, people seem much more friendly after those events.

Whereas New Yorkers were famous for not being friendly. And suddenly in the street, people would talk to each other. It was as if a deepening had occurred in the collective field.

Also pain, yes. But underneath it, an opening and a deepening. Somebody even suggested on television that the American collective psyche was being transformed.

It had been up to now a type A personality, the collective American personality, which probably means outgoing and getting things done. And there was a shift now through the pain, a deepening. Because from the pain, you move to a deeper level of, at some point there's some acceptance.

And so there's a shift also in the collective psyche through the suffering. Everybody has died a little bit in that. But the beautiful thing about death is that it is sacred.

And to Western world, I completely forgotten that. Older cultures still know that and they treat death with great respect. And when somebody dies, they whisper.

And then they go past the dead body and they take off their hats. They may have hated that person. But when that person is dead, suddenly that person, there's something sacred there.

And instinctively, humans know that. But only the westernized mind has forgotten that it's too much up here.

[Speaker 6] (3:24:15 - 3:24:34)

The New York Times Sunday edition had the magazine in it. And the cover was the cityscape without the two towers, the two World Trade Towers. And in their place stood only two columns of light.

[Speaker 1] (3:24:35 - 3:24:44)

Oh. Yeah. Thank you.

Thank you. Wonderful. Yes.

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:24:47 - 3:25:02)

There's something with you talking about this that has been a question for me around facilitating groups that's come up. That I'm now seeing as me either facing or not facing

death in the moment.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:03 - 3:25:03)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:25:05 - 3:25:57)

And what that is, is when I felt presence is talked, afterwards, I often don't remember what's said. And if somebody then says to me, could you repeat that? One way I've been able to explore it has been saying, well, maybe I'll talk around a different way and it will come.

Sometimes that's happened and there has been that poignancy, aliveness. Other times what I'm realizing is that it's me interfering, trying to explain it and not accepting that that moment has completed itself.

[Speaker 1] (3:25:57 - 3:25:59)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:25:59 - 3:26:06)

And whenever that happens, the energy in the room shifts.

[Speaker 10] (3:26:07 - 3:26:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:26:09 - 3:26:39)

And it may take time to get back on track, to haul the mind back in a way. And in one way, that's a very minor thing, really. But in another, I'm remembering in Hollyhock when you had used an example of somebody coming back in the room and asking a question and it didn't come back.

[Speaker 1] (3:26:39 - 3:26:39)

No.

[Speaker 4] (3:26:40 - 3:27:08)

And you used that example that it didn't come back. And so somewhere with the talk of death, for me it seemed that even in those moments to say it's not here now, what was said is gone. There's no retrieving.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:08 - 3:27:08)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:27:09 - 3:27:28)

And that there's perhaps a humbling in it and an admission that it has nothing to do with me, it has nothing to do with you, none of us can bring it back, just like none of us can bring back what those people or what has happened.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:29 - 3:27:29)

Yes.

[Speaker 4] (3:27:29 - 3:27:40)

Thank you. And that gives me perhaps a sense of space and permission Yes. to be more accepting.

[Speaker 1] (3:27:41 - 4:33:42)

Yes, not being here as a form identity, but simply as an opening, which means you've died. You can only really be effective when you have died as a form identity. I had this wonderful thing, I was in China early this year, on a mountain, there was a something carved in stone on top of a mountain, Chinese writing.

And I asked, what does that mean? And my Chinese friend said, Buddha, that means Buddha. There seemed to be two signs put together.

I said, what does the individual sign mean? And how does it fit together as Buddha? He says, the first sign means man, which means human being.

And the next sign next to it means no. That's Buddha. It's a denial of the reality of your form identity.

It's an absence rather than the presence is there when there's an absence of the form identity is presence. It's like you go, man, no. It's death.

When we talk about teaching presence, not everybody is going to teach presence directly in such a way as this. There are many other ways in which the new state of consciousness can be taught. And some are already doing it.

It can flow into many different activities. There are already teachers teaching it at school, not out in the open. It's not mentioned on the curriculum, but in whatever subject is there.

They manage to teach the new state of consciousness. Body workers enter that state, the good ones. When they do their body work, it is performed in thoughtless awareness.

And you know exactly what is needed. And ultimately, more and more you find that the body work is a means to you actually teaching presence and presence is the healer. And so you may find you may be called upon to teach presence directly, such as this, or it may flow increasingly into what you're already doing.

So you teach in an indirect way. Whatever it is, important to realize that that is your life purpose to embody that state of consciousness. And then you cannot not teach it in one way or another.

Your life purpose is to live it, to embody it, to be the flowering of consciousness. And then any purpose on a personal level, which is to do with your personal situations and maybe to do with things you've already learned and know is subservient to the greater purpose of teaching presence, the new state of consciousness. So it may be that life will remove you completely from whatever you're doing now, or it may be that presence will flow into more and more into what you're doing already.

And then there's a deepening of that. And the doing and the interactions that you have with people as part of your doing are ultimately an excuse, a means of bringing presence. Whatever you are doing is no longer the main thing.

It's the surface thing is whatever you're doing, whatever your activity may be. And there are not many things that presence cannot flow into and transform that activity. And your interactions, it looks as many of your interactions, you had those interactions because they're part of your daily, the job, the business that you do, whatever you do, and you interact with all kinds of people to get things done, to sort things out, to discuss this and that as part of whatever your external activity is.

And the wonderful thing is when all that becomes secondary, one could almost say an excuse for presence flowing into it. So you may be in a meeting talking about the new advertising campaign. If anybody is in advertising, it's possible.

Presence can flow into even that, perhaps. Why not? I've seen a few ads where there was presence shining through here and there.

Not many yet. In sports also, it's the core essence of being really a master at anything is the state of presence. But this goes beyond that.

It's being a master in life. Being a master in any activity requires you to be in the state of aware presence while you're performing whatever it is, then that is mastery. But what we are engaged in and what humankind needs is more than that.

It's more than people becoming extremely good at this or that. That can be an entry point. I saw a film about golf a while ago, a video called Bagger Vance.

And that's about somebody's teaching golf, but really teaching presence. And I

remember just a few scenes from it. The master golfer, how he suddenly before he hits that ball, I don't know the expressions for golf, he looks into the distance and goes, and it's actually mentioned, no thought.

There's a line about being free of thought. And then, oh, there's the truth. And that's about presence within the sphere of a limited activity.

Some therapists will become very effective in what they do, regardless of their therapeutic background and whatever they have learned, even psychoanalysts. I'm not, I'm saying that because psychoanalysis is a very mental mind. Even there, after 10 years of practicing, 15 years, 20 years or more of applying your mental knowledge, some of the psychoanalysts simply sit there after just, they've listened for 15 or 20 years and they've been interpreting for 15, 20 years or more, scribbled.

And more and more, they just, they give up. They just sit there and listen. And there comes the alertness and the stillness.

And then they speak from there, not from acquired knowledge anymore. That may still flow in here and there, certain terminologies, but that's where it comes from. And that's where the, then the, if they call it patient, strange word, it undergoes a change in the presence of the present therapist.

So see where it flows in and not have a compartment in your life where you practice presence, but not, then keep some of your life for business. That's serious. And then presence.

Somebody some years ago, I was talking about somebody who was doing a course in miracles. And I said something about his business. And he said, no, no, not there.

That's, I can't afford to do it. I can't afford to practice there. So your life purpose is to embody that.

And then it's not just having a group once or twice a week, or even seeing people. If you teach in such a direct way, that's very helpful too. But it's a continuous outflow.

I ran into a famous architect the other day. He had come to one or two talks of mine. He's the most famous Canadian architect.

And we talked for a while, and he told me that when he teaches, architect, he still teaches at university. He tries to teach what the state of presence is to his students and to create from there. And he tries to embody presence even in the buildings that he creates.

And he had been doing that before he came into contact with this more direct, the direct teaching of presence. And then he recognized what he had already been doing for years.

And that happens with some people who are already master at something and realize that in that field, they're already practicing presence.

So any external activity is an excuse for that. Otherwise, you might think that something you do out there really matters. And it doesn't.

If you die tomorrow, somebody else will take over your job. The moment you think that something that you do on the level of form ultimately matters, then you are lost again in the forms. And one characteristic of that new state of consciousness is a lightness, an intensity, but a lightness, not the intensity of egoic delusion, which is, this matters dreadfully, and we must get this done.

That's one kind of a totally different vibration. They may get it done, but in the process of getting it done, they're making themselves and 100 other people unhappy. And then they get it done, whatever it is.

It's called karmic action. All the employees are miserable, but the company is making a profit. For a while, but not that long anymore, because the old consciousness and all the structures that it has created are not going to survive that much longer.

So an intensity comes. There is an intensity about presence which is so different from what before you had regarded as intensity, which contained is always a strong element of fear. It doesn't, might not look like fear, if something matters dreadfully out there, there must be fear somewhere.

And so comes a lightness, but not without great intensity that flows into what you do. So that the master golfer doesn't go, I've got to hit that hole. I've got to get that, nothing is flowing.

There's an ego trying to do something. So there's a, as the title of that book goes, one of the many I haven't read, the lightness of being, well, the original title is actually the unbearable lightness of being. I don't know to whom it's unbearable.

In the book, it must be the ego, the lightness of being. And so to live in that state of lightness where nothing out there ultimately matters. It's not that you don't honor this moment and whatever you need to deal with, whatever arises, but you don't want anything through that to get something through it, to a bigger me, self.

And then comes that relaxed alertness, that is the intensity of presence, alert, but no tension. It's playing from then on, you play in the world of form. You still move within it, but you're free of needing a particular result, of needing to be confirmed in your identity through a particular result, outcome.

So the master, master, we use that for both men and women. I think that's right, isn't it? Master, or is there a female for master?

Just so I'm right. You're a master, the master of presence. Now, not to give you a new identity, that would be dreadful.

What are you into now? Well, I'm actually, I've become a master. How do you master presence, become a master of presence?

Not just in one little field. Well, all that means you become master of this moment, because presence is inseparable from this moment. How do you become master of this moment?

Do you try to control what happens in this moment? Are you that controlling master? No, it just means to be aligned with this moment.

This moment, to give it your attention, to look at it, whatever form it takes, the form changes, the moment remains. Whatever form it takes, you look at it. And in that moment of looking, there's thoughtless awareness.

That is the intensity of presence, and that is true intelligence operating. And then whatever needs to happen, happens through you, or it happens externally. It is amazing how many seemingly inexplicable events and connections suddenly come into play when one being is in the state of presence.

How many helpful factors suddenly come into play, and you cannot trace them back to causal factors. How did that connection, how did this person suddenly come in at the right moment? How did that happen just at the right moment?

It's because you're no longer cut off egoic entity. You're open to life. And life, then there's a great connectedness with other forms of life and the totality.

The intelligence of the whole operates through you. So it's not just we have realizations and insights and right action out of that state of acknowledging this moment without running away from it internally in any way, denying it internally in any way, an openness, and then see what happens. The master simply is master of this moment, which means completely open to whatever it is that arises at this moment.

That is the mastery, only this. And you're tested every moment. It's never a mastery that is an achievement that you can carry around with you.

Now I've made it. I'm a master. Every moment, again, determines whether or not you're a master.

An internal yes to what is, is the master completely. With that, all the stuff that the egoic mind likes dissolves. The complaining mind, the should into the shouldn't, and me and my story, and the rental projections of fear.

And then the central point of your life is no longer the story, but this moment. Neither

past nor future, which are still there, fine. But the central point increasingly becomes just this moment.

That's the master. That's all. It's not a big thing.

And yet it's a radical transformation of consciousness. And it's both big and little. Just make this.

This moment becomes the central point of your life because that's all there is. So you might as well make it into that. And not the next one, and not the last one.

Just this. And this is an amazing thing to sense the power of this moment as the power of life itself. No matter what form it takes, you welcome every form that this moment takes.

And that could be a million dollar arriving in your bank account, a million dollar leaving your bank account, the car breaking down, it is. And the next moment, somebody giving you a ride, anything, gain or loss. Now, gain is more easily accepted when that is the form that this moment takes.

But that's only one half of the equation. The other half will always be loss. That's the phenomenal universe.

So one half of your life will be gain, recognition, money, status, gain, a relationship, whatever. And then there's loss. And that comes continuously.

The egoic entity wants more gain. And no matter how much it adds to itself, it's never enough. It dreads the loss, which is death, which we talked about this morning.

So the great thing is that you actually, you welcome the loss just as much as you welcome the gain, if not more. Looks very strange. And remember, you no longer need to add anything to who you are for your identity.

That's a great liberation. The need to add to me the completeness of this moment. Not to add to look for an enhanced self.

To add as the play of form. Yes, I learned something new. That's interesting.

The play of form. Or make some money. The play of form.

It's not going to, you're not going to find yourself in it. And then you lose it again. So what do you teach?

When you teach directly, you teach this. And directly, a few of you are going to teach presence directly. Not through some other form.

Either one-on-one or in groups. And then there's the teaching of presence through something else. Through a secondary form.

Which you simply, you perform in that state. And life will tell you what it is. You start with what you're doing already.

No matter what it is, what you're doing already. Presence needs to start with what you're doing already. If it's the most boring of jobs.

Presence, you cannot wait for presence for a better opportunity, more conducive surroundings. Before you can be present. That's a continuous excuse.

It starts where you are now. It arises where you are now. And there's no excuse.

There will be many mental excuses. Why not here, not now? Your life can only change when you totally become aligned with the now.

No matter where you are. And it could be a prison. And you can't say, I need to get out of here.

I want to have a spiritual life. I want to teach presence. How can I?

This is dreadful. Of course, it's dreadful from the judgmental point of view. You start it here and now.

And see the transformation that happens. You may, maybe you're working as a waiter, a waitress. But you think this is, I just need to get out of here.

Why not start there? And bring presence when you bring a soup to the person in the restaurant. And you put the soup on the table.

Would you like anything else? Can I help you with something else? The quality, whatever it is.

The disciple asked the Zen master, Master, how do I enter Zen? The question means, how do I enter the state of consciousness that is Zen? How do I enter Zen?

And they were just walking outside in nature. And the master said, can you hear the sound of that mountain stream? And it was a very distant sound.

And the disciple started, yes, I can. I hear it. And then the master said, enter Zen from there.

Oh, and then they walk on. And five minutes later, or 10 minutes later, the mind started working again. Because while you listen to the mountain stream, of course, there was no mind.

He was attentive, alert. And then the mind started, Master, I've been thinking, what would you have said if I said, no, I can't hear the mountain stream. And the Zen master says, disciple, yes, enter Zen from there.

No matter. Just a few words before we open again to questions. A few words about being with another person who may be coming to you for help.

And you already know the essence. Be in your body and listen. In many cases, you won't know the answer.

The problem may be very complex. Most people's problems are. Become comfortable with that.

If you're not comfortable with not knowing, you can't teach presence. The mind thinks, I must know. What can I possibly say to this person?

Or tries to say something that you read in a book and it'll lack power. It doesn't come out of the now. It doesn't come out of presence.

Or some explanation. Or a belief that makes you feel good. To become comfortable with not knowing.

That's an incredible state of great depth. And maybe even after a long session with that person, who knows? Maybe you won't have said a single word.

And yet, there's the field of presence. And maybe five minutes after the person walks out, suddenly a realization comes to him or her. Or suddenly, the illusory nature of his or her problems is suddenly recognized.

But it's most likely that at some point, words will come out of your mouth. Or a question. And another question.

A strange thing happens often. Not often now do people come to me with stories. Unhappy stories.

But there was a time when people would come to me with unhappy stories. Looking for some way out or solution. And the more they were telling their unhappy stories, the more happy I felt inside.

The deeper the peace and the aliveness. So much so that I couldn't help... I had to smile.

And they didn't understand that. Because there's nothing to smile about in their story. But I did it with one woman.

And she said... She stopped talking suddenly. Her story came to an end.

And said, Oh, I can feel it. You're doing healing. That was her framework for understanding what was happening.

And she called it healing. And it is healing in the deepest sense. Yes.

And that was the time when I myself didn't fully understand what I was doing. Even now I don't, of course. Nobody does.

No mind could do that. But I understood less than I do now. And I thought, She must be right.

This is healing. That's how I became a healer. But that word attracted quite a few people who were not interested in any transformation of consciousness.

But they said, I have this pain in my ankle. Can you take that away, please? Or this hurts here.

Can you do something about this? And for a while I did. And some came for physical healing and got something else.

But after a year or two, I dropped the label healer. But it's still what it is. It's healing in a very deep sense of the word.

But ultimately, there's not going to be a difference between meeting a person in that context and meeting somebody in the street, or meeting somebody in a restaurant, or in the store, or at work. For a while, it may well be that when somebody comes, you enter that state, as some therapists do. They enter the state of presence in the therapeutic setting or framework.

And they can be very effective within that. The moment they step out of the therapeutic framework, their presence is lost, and wrinkles reappear again, and the tension in their face comes back, and they're identified with mind. You can see it, how it comes back.

The moment they stop out of their office, or the wife rings, and then the next client or patient comes in, and they all... It's confined, even sometimes to a room, to a particular activity or function. And ultimately, you're no different in that teaching situation, to call it that, than in any other situation.

You meet everybody in the same state of open presence. And you look at them. If we only get this here, everything would be transformed.

The ability to look at another person, in the state of thoughtless awareness, for three seconds. Give them three seconds of that preciousness. Three seconds of thoughtless awareness, while you meet someone.

So, that's not a big thing, just the greatest gift. And then perhaps it becomes four seconds, five. People like to meet me, not because of the person, because of that state that they sense.

They sense something, that there's no judgment whatsoever in the mind. There's complete openness, complete, and there's that energy field of presence. And they find

themselves in that.

They may carry around, of course they will, a mind-based sense of identity. Always inadequate, as all mind-based senses of identity are. And when you meet a person in presence, they find, for the first time, they recognize themselves through you, that form.

And it feels good to be yourself. For some people, for the first time. They haven't been themselves.

Who is themselves? They're all trying to be someone that's in the nature of human existence. Animals are themselves.

Unless they have lived with humans for too long. But most animals are just, even after living with humans, it's a miraculously, most animals still are themselves. Not playing a role, trying to be the cat.

It just is. It does. It moves.

It sits. It rests. It sleeps.

It jumps. It is completely itself. And humans are trying to be something.

Not enough yet. I'm not enough yet. Depending on what people's feedback you get from others.

And so, to be yourself for the first time, and to recognize yourself through another human being, that fullness that you are, and you totally accept it. And that's then misinterpreted by the mind, as if you had something that you can give them, and then they'll run after you. What was that?

I need to talk to you about that. And of course, for a while, that is your function. Your function for a while is to be the reflector of their reality, of who they are in the depths of their being.

And who they are is the spacious presence, the stillness underneath all the mental, emotional formations, the formless one. And that's what you reflect back to them. So for a while, people will love that they find themselves.

And that's your function. You don't immediately say, no, from now on, I don't want to see you anymore. It's all in you, which is true.

But for a while, it may be your function to be that reflection, that reflector. And to be that, all that is required is holding that space of thoughtless awareness. Then you reflect that.

That's all. If that were your only practice, whoever you meet for the first five seconds,

you look at them in thoughtlessness, total innocence. And before you know it, it'll be more than five seconds.

That's the depths of true teaching. And I read only a few days ago, somebody said the decisive encounters in the world are not between two famous politicians or two statesmen meeting and shaking hands and having a talk. The decisive encounters in the world are you meeting the clerk in the store, because that's where it's at.

The decisive meetings are in the street, in the office, in the store, two human beings relating beyond mental concepts. It starts with one. You can't expect the other person to do it, too, because you expect nothing in that state.

So you're not demanding that the other person should be behaving in a certain way. They probably won't. And yet, change happens in the spaciousness of presence.

I will be present with you if you behave in such and such a way. Then I'll... Otherwise, I'm not going to be present with you.

So the teaching is no longer confined to a particular setting. It's a limited view that may also apply, that people come and say, but it's everywhere, everywhere. And just the arising of thoughtless awareness, the cessation of compulsive thinking is the new state of consciousness on the planet, without which the planet is not even going to make it.

Well, the planet might make it, but certainly humans won't if that shift doesn't happen within the next hundred years, because otherwise the old consciousness will continue and it'll create more violence, more chaos, more destruction of the environment, more of everything, more consumer goods until everybody's drowning and others have nothing and the others are drowning in consumer goods. The cessation of thought, and that's a pretty radical thing, arising above thought as your normal state of consciousness, not perhaps all at once. For a while, you have one foot in thought and one foot out of thought.

Sometimes thought drags you back into thought completely. And at other times, you're almost out. You say, oh, wow.

And for a while that's there and then suddenly you get dragged back into thought. So for a while, I can't predict how long, you move between the two. It is possible, if not likely, that teaching, if you do it in a more formal kind of teaching, may deepen the arising of that state in you, may accelerate it.

The arising of thoughtless awareness because there is a demand for it. When people come, life is demanding something of you and then when the demand is there, it comes. This is, I experience it always when there's a group.

It's the pull of the group that pulls the presence out of me and the words that come out.

They're being pulled out. Otherwise, if I sat here alone, I wouldn't be talking.

There would be presence. I would be present with the flowers with a little less intensity because it's not needed to be present with flowers. Not such great intensity is needed.

It's beautiful, just presence. But here the presence is cutting through and actually while you sit there is dissolving mental accumulations. So what is required here is a greater intensity of presence and when it's required, it comes.

The opening is there. That's the same with, it works even on a physical level, energy on a physical level. If you never move physically, then after a while you have less and less physical energy because the demand for it isn't there or people who are unemployed for long periods of time and do nothing for years, then they don't even have the energy to do anymore because it's not required.

But as soon as the demand is there, it comes and the demand on the planet, the overwhelming demand on the planet is for a new state of consciousness to arise. It wants to arise. And so all you, you become an opening and then it moves through.

People will pull it out of you. And don't believe the mind when it says, I'm not ready. You can't get ready for presence.

Prepare for the now. There's a single thing here that is the teaching. I don't know how I can talk about it for so long if it's just a single thing.

And that single thing is awareness, pure thoughtless awareness. And some of you, occasionally it arises in some of you, there is a state, I've just mentioned that one foot here, one foot there and another characteristic of that state in which some of you still are, one foot in the world of thought and thought-based identity and one foot out. One characteristic of that state is you move from contracted to the open state.

I'm sorry, I lost that thought. It's gone. It'll come back if it's necessary.

Foot in two worlds, in thought, out of thought. And that's how it is. You don't need to demand to be totally free of thought yet.

Not that you will never use thought either when you finally, to be free of thought, all it means you're free of self lodged in thought. A sense of self lodged in mind activity and the emotions that go with it, a me, an image that isn't complete, hasn't arrived yet. So to become free of thought is to become free of a self, sense of self lodged in thinking.

When it becomes free then, the compulsive nature of thinking gradually decreases. That compulsive stream. Because it's only compulsive because you equate who you are with thought activity and thought creations.

And of course you need to keep yourself going. That's why the compulsive thinker arises.

And then your sense of self shifts from being trapped in thought and the emotions that go with thought to being the spacious, still, thoughtless, aware presence.

The vastness in which a few thoughts happen. And that means you're free of thought. And you've gone beyond.

You're not incapable of thought. Thought can still operate for certain things here and there. To speak you need some thought.

But it's linked into presence. Not a self-serving, repetitive stream of noise. So that thought still arises, but it's no longer a problem.

It no longer has the power to make you unhappy, which is what thought likes to do. It loses that. It doesn't have the heaviness about it anymore when it's free of self, trapped sense of self, a me, my story, my life.

Then when you have one foot still in that old consciousness and one foot in the new, in that there's an intermediate stage here for many people. And that where you realize the relative nature of all thought. Thought is still there a lot of the time.

And yet you're not completely in it anymore. You're moving out already. And that you recognize it by, more and more you recognize thought is thought.

And you're not totally believe in every thought that comes up. Oh, oh, oh. You can see how thought drags you along.

You have one thought about yourself or somebody else and you go completely with it. And now the difference is the same thought may still come up, but it doesn't drag you along with it. The thought goes, oh, okay.

To some extent, the whole work that Byron Katie does is to see that ultimately no single thought has enormous validity. It's a relative position of perspective. I don't think she's ever said that, but that's how it is.

It helps you to step out of a complete belief in everything that the mind throws up, all conditioned. So that's what I was going to say when I said one foot here, one foot there. What comes with that is, you see that, and the way I started, I said that for the first time a few weeks ago at a retreat, at the beginning of a retreat, said one of our practices at our retreat, that is not to take our thoughts too seriously.

And that already is the arising of what I sometimes call spaciousness around thought. And that grows, the spaciousness around thought. And then thought loses its heaviness.

It loses its self, nature itself, the illusion that that's you. So the cessation of thought is the cessation of a thought-based sense of self. When the self is no longer thought in thought, then by itself thought becomes more quiet.

And it's no longer me, me. I need to keep myself. I need to, more of this, more of that.

I'm going to, that's, thought is fine. And then there are the spaces between thought that arise. It is quite possible, and I would, I don't like to make predictions, but I'll just keep it short.

A time will come when thought as we know it, as conceptualization and words going through your head, that won't happen anymore. And humans live continuously in stillness, a state of great intelligence and of deep inner connectedness with being. And at that time, if there are still schools, they will be teaching very different things from now, of course.

If there are still schools, you might hear something like a little five-year-old asking, teacher, is it really true that once human beings existed who thought that the future could be better than now? And the teacher says, yes, they existed once. Unbelievable as it may seem.

If they still speak, but in that state, they won't be speaking anymore. There will just be the immediate communication beyond words. Enough of that.

This is where that new state is emerging. And all teachings ultimately point to that. Take no thought for the moral.

Cause and miracles seem to be full of thought, and yet it takes you in the end into stillness. The end of words has almost come, it says towards the end. The teaching of Krishnamurti, what is the essence of Krishnamurti's teaching?

He's never said it. Don't think. All he said was, let's look at thought, can we look at thought?

Can thought get you there? Can you, let's investigate thought and let's look at it. Until finally you arrive at, no.

And he himself, for those of you who are familiar with Krishnamurti, was a great teacher. Would spend a large part of his life when he went for walks every day for two or three hours, and said, not touched by a single thought during the whole walk. Not needed, just stillness.

The essence of Buddhism is that. Ramana Maharshi, famous teacher in the first half of this century, what is the essence of his teaching? It's contained in his words, which was an answer to a question, how can we judge our spiritual progress?

How can we know whether we are making spiritual progress? And the answer was, the degree of absence of thoughts is the measure of progress on the spiritual path. Oh, and the minds don't like to hear that.

There's some people who say, no, he didn't say that. And you have to show them and say, yes, there it is. Ramana Maharshi was a great Indian teacher that some of you are familiar with.

I'm just pointing that it's all going to the same essence. Nisargadatta, they asked him, what's the real meaning of meditation? Of course, the real meaning of meditation is the changed state of consciousness.

And this meditation, he said, the radical refusal to harbor thoughts. He was a bit like a Zen master. So the radical refusal to harbor thoughts, it's a masculine approach.

The female is the dental, you relinquish thought, you let go. And then there's the male is the Zen, it's also male, no thought, I refuse to have thoughts. Now that could be mistaken for suppression of thoughts.

And it could be that if it's not practiced rightly. Now, that is also a powerful statement for those of you who are inclined that way, the male approach. And now this is meaningless unless there's enough presence in you already through which you understand that statement.

There cannot be the radical refusal to harbor thoughts if there's not enough presence in you. The fact that you can say no to thought means an enormous amount of presence is arising or you're suppressing through willpower, in which case you won't be rid of thoughts for very long. When the body becomes tense, okay, I'm not thinking.

And then after a while you blow up and then you think more than ever. But if there's a true thing that is the radical refusal to harbor thoughts and that simply means a great presence arising in which that becomes possible. I don't need thought.

And the thought comes in and just, no, don't want it. So in whatever way it comes, it may come in a more gentle way through you. Thought becomes less of a threat to you.

More important, less heavy, and gradually you move out. So this is the teaching, whatever, you will only teach one thing, just as I teach one thing, moving beyond thought. The cessation of thought as the basis for your life.

And that is, which is the title of the book by Krishnamurti, that is the awakening of intelligence. True intelligence. Great intelligence.

If this were a Zen monastery, we would be spending the whole night in rigorous meditation, that's the male approach, facing the walls, and we would open the windows to make it really uncomfortable. And you would experience the arising of suffering. More in the head than some pain in the body, yes, cold perhaps, but most suffering is in the head.

You're complaining about this dreadful situation until you can't stand it anymore. And there's the possibility of a moment when thought subsides because you can't stand that burden anymore. And it goes.

And all that remains is then cold and discomfort in the body. Not a problem. You're free of suffering.

All suffering came out of that. Surrender has happened. Complete yes to what is.

This moment, cold, painful body, hungry because we didn't have much to eat. This is the Zen ones. I'm hungry, I'm cold, my body is painful.

Awful place. What am I doing here? And suddenly thought subsides into just this.

And suddenly thoughtless awareness is there. And then perhaps after 10 minutes you say, Master, Master, I've got it! And then the master says, Drop that!

Because it's become a concept again. If any questions arise concerning the teaching of that one thing, framework, one-on-one groups, while you listen, just listen. Listen.

Spacious listening.

[Speaker 3] (4:33:44 - 4:35:16)

Thank you, Eckhart, for sharing so many things with us today. Last night, as you were talking about being with groups of people and having presence pulled through you, I'm reminded of, I guess I'd call it a challenge, something interesting that's been going on occasionally with me when I'm with a group of people whose pain bodies seem to be particularly present. It is quite interesting that I was declaring for myself that I wanted to work with people who are ready to really shift their consciousness.

And the phone rang, and it was to work with people who have been court-ordered for substance abuse to come to a program. So they're sort of involuntarily showing up, and they have a lot of issues. And I realized that the greater the pain, the greater the opportunity sometime for a presence to arise.

So I said yes. And sometimes afterward, for a couple of days, I don't want to talk to anyone on the phone. I just feel like I need to, I don't know what term to use, downtime, or I need quiet to sort of recuperate.

And at times that's true, and other times I don't seem to need that. And I'm wondering from your own experience if you can shed some light to that phenomenon that seems to happen.

[Speaker 1] (4:35:17 - 4:37:50)

Needing, after being with people, the need to withdraw and be alone for a while. Yes, I also have that. After a retreat or after an intensive, I love to be alone and simply be.

It's a strange, I enter a state of almost nothingness after a retreat or after an intensive. There's no thought, or almost no thought, and just a state of an absence of anybody there. And hard to describe.

It's very nice. Just nothing. And I can sit there for hours in a chair just like this.

And it's beautiful. It seems it's what is needed. And then the time comes to go out again.

It's a going in and then out. My natural inclination, this form, likes being a hermit or invisible. And life at the moment doesn't allow that.

So it's pulling me out. I was a hermit for several periods in my life and always loved it. And then the call came, no, you have to go out and do the complete opposite.

Be out there. And then I surrendered to that and that also became very enjoyable, deep joy in that. There may be some teachers who seem to continuously be interacting with people and perhaps that works for them.

Just like you, I also need to go within at times, be alone, not talk to anybody. So there's nothing wrong with that.

[Speaker 3] (4:37:58 - 4:39:05)

That leads to the other part of what's coming up for me is at the same time, what you talked about before about the terrorists and a way to look at that. I'm really comfortable with the way of looking at it that you talked about and that's really helped me be with other people. But it ties in also with a sense of inner urgency, a sense of needing to be out there, to be of service because of what caused that in the first place, the insanity, the rampant insanity that we do see.

And so in terms of trying to balance the quiet time and then being out there and feeling the pull to be out there, that's the challenge to me as well as looking at how to be at peace internally with what is, to say yes to what is, don't resist what is, and yet a call to step up to our true magnificent selves in a way that we need to apparently to continue.

[Speaker 1] (4:39:05 - 4:39:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (4:39:06 - 4:39:21)

And I wonder if you could speak to that urgency in terms of what and how to balance in life that time where we're quiet in our time to move and then the message to convey to

people about waking up.

[Speaker 1] (4:39:22 - 4:48:23)

Yes, the urgency is there because there's an acceleration of the insanity also in the world and we'll see more of that. So there's great urgency, the arising of the new consciousness and I feel it very strongly. That's why there's been such an acceleration of the work that I do because the urgency is there.

It doesn't stop me from occasionally withdrawing and then go out again. It's with going within and then you go out again into the world. Otherwise you might lose your inner peace.

If you thought you needed to fix something out there instead of realizing the difference, your state of consciousness makes the difference. That's what makes the difference, not fixing anything out there. You could be drawn into the illusion that there are things that need fixing.

You can, of course, do helpful things out there too. The essence of the work is not fixing anything out there. It's your state of consciousness and you would be contributing to the new consciousness even if you lived alone and simply, although most of you are not called to living alone and cut yourself off in a monastic setting perhaps, but if you did and lived in a state of freedom from thought and presence, that would have an effect on the world too.

Not anything that you could see on the visual, on the surface of things, but your state of consciousness will affect the world even if you never interacted with people. It would still have an effect and help many others who are also entering. Most of us are not meant to be hermits at this time.

Most of us are not even meant to be in a monastery. I loved my, quite a few times in my life, I felt, oh, it would be great to live here and I got very close to living in a Buddhist monastery. I could have lived in a Christian monastery too.

It didn't matter to me what monastery, the truth. I knew I could use any framework to express the truth. I could use exclusively Christian language or Buddhist language.

The truth is beyond that. And yet every time I got close to the monastery, I could see the heaviness of the form, the old forms. Although I have a great love for that, something didn't allow me to enter the monastery.

And most of us also, otherwise we would be in it. But that is not our path, is to be out there and bring that state of consciousness into the mad world, wherever you are, rather than withdrawing. It doesn't mean that you cannot occasionally step back, shut the doors, switch off the telephone and just be.

That's a beautiful regeneration. Or go out into nature occasionally. When you've been with people for a while, you've seen enough people, then you go into nature.

Enormously regenerating to be with nature or just sit, walk in a forest by the seashore, wherever. And it's easy to be in thoughtlessness in nature because everything in nature is thoughtless. Prior to thought, you are post-thought.

Everything in nature is pre-thought, before thought. Great inner, great connectedness. So to regenerate, you may occasionally need to do that.

And yet you are doing, you're out there teaching those people, some of whom don't even want to be there, and yet they are there. And perhaps something happens. Perhaps you can explain to them that they have a choice between happiness and unhappiness.

Explain about the pain body. Quite a few people are ready to listen to that because they immediately recognize the truth of when you address pain body, they know it so well. Many people who are drawn to drugs just cannot stand the pain.

The pain of ordinary existence, the pain that they carry inside, and they run away from that pain. And many of those people have great spiritual potential. Just the same as alcoholics.

Many people have gone through transformation through AA meetings. They've done great work. People for whom alcohol was their first teacher.

It was a kind of negative teacher, but without it, if they hadn't become addicted to that, the growth wouldn't have happened. So you could teach, perhaps, how to be with the pain instead of running away from it. And it's not going to kill them.

Of course, some pain bodies, if they rise up into the mind and take over your mind, they can drive a person to suicide. In that sense, pain bodies can sometimes kill a person. But pain that is looked at, as long as you're running away from it, it seems so enormous, that pain.

But when you're shown that you can actually be with that, and if you embrace it, it doesn't kill you. If you surrender to the pain, and then they have to do it with you, for you cannot do it alone yet. Let's do it together.

When the pain is there, let's surrender to that and hold. And let's be the spaciousness in which this pain happens. So some people may come to you with acute pain bodies, because it's often those people who are more ready than others, because they can't stand it anymore.

But it's a challenge to be working with pain bodies. It's a beautiful challenge. It's an interesting thing when a pain body becomes active in a person, and in that moment,

provided that that person already understands the nature of pain body, and at that moment, the person gets taken over by pain body, you can then speak to the consciousness that is still there underneath it, and point out what's happening.

And something in that person will be listening, but the pain body on the surface will be denying. But you can still address the awareness that is still there underneath the pain body. So you bypass the pain body.

This is an interesting thing to do. In a person whose pain body has become very active, you address the sanity underneath it, and something will be listening. I've seen a few cases of people waking up even in the middle of a pain body attack, when the sanity in them, the awareness was being addressed, suddenly stepping out, and the pain body collapsed.

And I've occasionally been attacked by pain bodies, almost physically, got very close, not quite physically, but it got very close. Pain bodies who felt so threatened that they became like in some films, it's like the whole person is turning red. And one pain body who was close to attacking me, instead, he jumped up and ran out of the room.

And I thought I've seen the last of this person. And 10 minutes later, he came back, and the pain body had subsided. And he said, I'm okay now.

And this person had one of the heaviest pain bodies I've ever seen. And he became, in a relatively short period of time, as he continued to disidentify, got taken over again and again, and the pain body lost a great deal of its energy charge.

[Speaker 2] (4:48:28 - 4:49:12)

I, probably three quarters of the people I see actually come to me because of physical illness. And there's often emotional components to that, of course, but that's their principal problems, you know, common things and not so common things. And maybe a quarter are more obvious mental health kinds of things, anxiety, fear, depression.

But in regarding the physical illness, most of what you talk about, we might recognize more in the realm of the mental emotional kinds of clients. I was wondering if you could talk about, you know, the aspect of dealing with physical illness from this perspective.

[Speaker 1] (4:49:16 - 5:08:31)

So one aspect is dealing with physical illness in yourself. And then another aspect of it is dealing with physical illness, people who may be coming to you, not because that is your profession. Many people come to you in the professional setting who are suffering from physical illness.

When many others of you would not be meeting people in that setting, but it may well be

that people who are seeking healing, who are seeking consciousness, freedom from suffering, also carry a physical illness within. So that may be, let's talk first about illness in yourself. I touched on it briefly in the book where I mentioned that there's a tendency to see yourself as a sick person.

When sickness arises, immediately the egoic needs, which is always looking for something to make your sense of self stronger and will devour and incorporate almost anything good or bad and say, that's me. So the tendency, as long as that tendency operates in you, an illness arises and it will be grasped by that mind conditioning and it will become part of your sense of self. And if it's a serious illness, it can obliterate a lot of the other identifications that you have, that who you think you are, and then you might see yourself derive your sense of identity from a mental image of a sick person.

And the moment an identification has happened and it happens easily because, as I'm sure you also know, some people who otherwise are not given a lot of attention get attention through an illness. The great doctors are going now to giving them attention and they think they are important. And in the mad ways of the ego looking for an enhanced identity, the ego will grasp that also and gain a sense of greater importance from illness, not in every case, but not in the same degree in everyone.

But the tendency is there, you then become an ill person, see yourself as that. And you will, the moment a mental identification with a physical condition has happened, the strange thing is that you don't want to let go of the illness, but that is unconscious, of course. Because the moment you have identified, it's become part of me, of course, you don't want to lose part of who you think you are.

And in some people's cases, illness that has become an important part, an important aspect of their inability to heal is because the mind doesn't want them to heal. That is often the case. So less so with you.

Healing, on the other hand, has enormous capacity. An illness has enormous capacity also to awaken. It has enormous capacity to pull you into greater unconsciousness.

And it has an even greater capacity to awaken you. And for many people, it's happened that a serious illness that they were faced with, which always contains the possibility of death, so it's any serious, it is serious because it contains the possibility of death, has led to a great awakening of consciousness, because you don't know how much time you've got anymore. And the whole time-bound consciousness that has, I still have a lot of future to complete myself, and you realize, I may not have.

And there may be pain associated with the illness, physical pain. And again, physical pain can lead to greater egoic contraction. And physical pain can lead also to surrender.

I've met some people for whom physical pain had become the only teacher they ever

had, and it's led to surrender. I've seen people with AIDS already no longer being able to walk and looked into their eyes. And that's just one example.

I often, I like into, when you look into people's eyes, you can see the state of surrender or resistance. I've seen people with AIDS with light shining through their eyes. Their illness had driven them into surrender.

Not in each case. There are people with AIDS whose illness has driven them into greater egoic contraction. And so there are always the two possibilities.

Illness taking you into a more contracted ego, and then you become a bitter, unhappy, deeply suffering entity. And you're hanging on to the illness without knowing it, because at least you know who you are. Now, or it is becomes a teacher of surrender.

And even pain could do that. I've been free of pain for many years, except recently, for some reason, a few pains have appeared in my body. For a few days, a pain appeared here, and then a pain appeared there.

And it's simply being with it. I don't know why it appeared. Maybe the energy charge is getting too much for the body, a week-long retreat.

It's like the body perhaps is not made for such an energy charge. It's like taking a little toy that runs on two 1.5 volt batteries, and you push its button, as I have one. You push its button, and you push the belly, and it says, that tickles, that tickles.

And then you plug that toy into the socket, into the electric outlet, whatever it is, 190 volt. And for a while, it says more significant things than it tickles. But the mechanism isn't quite adjusted to that voltage yet.

So any pain is surrender. Instead of formulating an image of yourself as a sick person, reduce your illness, if it's your illness, to whatever the condition is at this moment, rather than having a big mental image of what has happened, what has led to it, and how the illness is going to develop, because it may not, and what's going to happen to me. So allow the illness to force you into the now, because if you're not in the now, and you suffer from a degenerative illness, that's like AIDS, or any other serious illness, if you're not in the now, you will suffer.

And I'm not speaking of the pain that is maybe caused, or the discomfort, or the disability that is being caused by the illness, because that's not suffering, it's pain. It's discomfort, or it's a disability, but it's not suffering. Suffering requires a mind-made entity that complains about my condition, and projects itself into an even worse future.

So allow the illness, only the condition of this moment, in whatever way the illness manifests at this moment, so it's not really a huge illness anymore, there is a pain here, there is a disability, there is a discomfort. Allow the illness, in some illnesses, you don't

even have that, you just know that you're ill, and you might not even feel anything, they've just told you that, yes, you have a serious illness, but it hasn't manifested yet as a feeling. And there, just this moment, let the illness push you into intense presence, because when you leave presence, you will suffer.

So if you want to not suffer, refuse to leave this moment. This moment, you can live with. The pain of this moment, you can live with.

Or the discomfort, or the disability of this moment, you can live with. But if you leave mentally this moment, then you have an illness. So we deduce illness to just whatever it is now, then that takes away an identity built on that.

So you're not fighting an illness anymore, nor are you resigning yourself to being ill. You're simply surrendering to the condition of this moment. Not the idea that, okay, I might as well resign myself to the fact that I'm ill.

That's not surrender, you have a mental image. Surrender is just this moment is as it is. And I say yes to that.

And then the illness will transform your consciousness. If it has potentially the power to drive you into presence. Even in people who've never heard of presence, it's happened.

I've told a few times, and I told it again last week at the retreat, the example when I, talking about disability, when I was at university, I saw this person in a wheelchair who would come in. And this is an example of no greater disability could have happened than this person who was sitting in a wheelchair. And I saw him every day at lunchtime being fed by people.

And he couldn't talk anymore. He couldn't move a single limb. His head was slumped downwards.

His voice could only produce croaking sounds, which one or two people could interpret. And he couldn't keep the food in his mouth. Half the food could always fall out.

I asked, who is this man? They said, he teaches physics. He's a professor.

And he has, it has a name. Motor degenerative something. Motor neural disease.

A rare degenerative disease. And one day I looked into his eyes, because he was coming through the door at the same time as me. And for the first time, I realized deeply what happens, how illness can become a teacher.

Because there was no suffering in his eyes, just clarity, not a little complaining me. And nobody, a worse illness than that you can hardly imagine. Because the illness, you cannot, you're not supposed to live with that for more than three or four years.

Gradually everything becomes paralyzed, except your brain. The whole, everything, all functions are lost. But you can still think.

And that's what happened. And I looked into his eyes, and I saw he's not suffering. And they had given him two years.

They said, they told me this man was going to live for another two years. That's how much the doctors gave him to live. And 10 years later, I had long left the university environment behind.

I had spent time on my park bench. And I was, would often go into new stands to look at, to see what's happening in the world, because I didn't have a TV or radio, so just read the headlines. And then I looked at Newsweek magazine, and this very man was on the cover of Newsweek magazine in his wheelchair.

And he had become the most famous physicist in the world. 10 years after he'd been given two years to live. 10 years later, he was the most famous theoretical physicist in the world.

And they call him the successor of Einstein. And then I read the interview, and it said, the one sentence I remember in it, he said about his life, he could now speak because they constructed an artificial speech thing through which he can express himself, and said about his life, who could have wished for more? And that was about talking about his life.

Surrender had happened. And because surrender had happened, all the self-identification with the mentally created me wasn't there anymore. Not complete letting go of thought yet.

No, a lot of thought, because he had nothing else to do. Nobody had yet pointed out to him the possibility of going beyond thought, but yet his thought had become very creative. Because he had surrendered, presence had happened, and thought then arose out of presence.

So he had great insights. I believe he's still alive. Stephen Hawkins, and he's still at the same university.

And now it's 15 or 20 years since I met him. 20 probably, if not more. And I could see what the potential for, how illness can become your teacher, if used rightly.

Now, if an ill person comes to you, or any person, I never really differentiate between a physical condition, or a mental condition, or an emotional condition. In a way, they're all one. If anybody comes to you who cannot surrender, you have to surrender for them.

Sometimes people ask me, somebody close to them comes, and somebody very close to

them is suffering, either physically or emotionally. And they're not letting go of the suffering. They cannot get out of that.

And so you suffer, because you see somebody so close to you suffer so much, and you want them to step beyond that. And it's the same that you would practice with reference to yourself, is to surrender that this person is in suffering, complete acceptance of this suffering person as not wanting to change them. That embracing, and then looking, the power of your attention moves.

And that is the great healer, the giving of full attention, which implies surrender, all resistance is out of the way. So, but it's not so much giving attention to the symptom, but to the totality of that person. Just embrace that person with your attention, and then see what happens.

You still do, in your case, there are certain things you do on the physical level, you give certain things, you administer. And yet there's the consciousness, the field into which they come when they come to you. Can you be, although you have to use your mind to some extent while you listen to them, I'm sure you practice also being in the state of thoughtless awareness.

So let them come into that spaciousness. If healing is possible, healing will happen in that spaciousness. That is your gift to them, into which they come.

So I wouldn't treat physical illness as a separate problem. It's always, and I know almost nothing about physical conditions. So I can't talk about it on that level.

All I, I always address the totality. I don't even know anything about emotional conditions or mental conditions, just the totality of that being here. And I accept the way they are completely.

And yet words may suddenly come, just as you may give, take that three drops a day, words out of that acceptance, words sometimes arise and they may be just right. The power of attention is very great, pure attention to the entire human being, not one aspect of that form. So don't underestimate the power of attention, just which is thoughtless.

And again, we don't have separate compartments anymore where we now we're dealing with a sick person. And here we're meeting the supermarket cashier. It's all the same because it's the same field of attention that you give when you say hello in thoughtless awareness for five seconds as the attention you give to a person who seems dreadfully ill, the same field of spacious presence, no differentiation anymore of who they are or what their condition is or whether they have 50 more years to live or one more week to live.

It's all the same. Attention is the greatest healer, which is presence.

[Speaker 6] (5:08:35 - 5:09:30)

Along the same lines, being present with pain, whether it's mental or emotional. Is there some pain that is just so great that one cannot stay present with? Example, coming across a car accident, even with a very conscious being.

My husband, I think, is a very conscious being. And two nights ago, back spasm, screaming. Now he's on a morphine drip in the hospital.

And during his screaming, I'm saying, look in my eyes, breathe. And he's just saying, I can't, I can't. There is pain.

I guess that's a question. Is there pain that just comes on so quickly and is so great that one, that being present with it is almost impossible? And when that, where do you go with that as an onlooker and as an experiencer?

Because that could have been me feeling that.

[Speaker 1] (5:09:30 - 5:12:08)

Yeah, thank you. Intense pain can consume a person almost completely. There seems to be nothing left except the pain.

And in that case, you, as the person close to that person, can bring presence, intense presence to that and hold it. In very intense pain is rarely prolonged, although some people suffer from that also. And that is, of course, the most dreadful thing that could happen to be continuously in pain.

If it happens to someone close to you, all you can do is hold the space of intense presence so that you don't get drawn also into the pain. That is a great healer. And you will rise, the degree of presence will reflect the intensity of the pain.

So it's possible that your degree of presence will be enormous if the pain that a person close to you suffers is very intense. And that could also be the case, there are forms of emotional pain of very great intensity too. And some person close to you may be in dreadful emotional pain, perhaps totally consumed by the pain body, completely identified with it.

And then your degree of presence, the intensity will correspond to the intensity of the pain and there will be enormous presence suddenly arising. If you don't get drawn into reaction, and then you will suffer with them, not as intensely, but you will also suffer. If they cannot surrender, you need to surrender.

If the person who is in such intense suffering that surrender is impossible, somebody close to them needs to surrender for them. It's secondary surrender. And it also works miracles.

Somebody who is close to you embraces completely that. And that's, again, there's always a redemptive dimension to illness and pain. Fortunately, that sharp pain, I don't know what is his condition now.

Is he still in pain?

[Speaker 6] (5:12:08 - 5:12:28)

He's on a morphine drip in the hospital, so there's no pain. But the pain was, it would go for 30 minutes at a time, just screaming pain. And breathing into it and staying present was impossible for him to do.

And I run across people like this. This is not unusual.

[Speaker 1] (5:12:30 - 5:18:28)

Intense pain can also consume the egoic entity. It can't survive anymore. Any intense, dreadful disability, as in the case of the person I just talked about, an egoic entity finds it hard to survive in the presence of such intense pain.

I had a pain probably much less intense last week on the retreat in New York. And for three days, I had a lower back pain, which I hadn't had before. And at one point, so much that I couldn't get out of bed.

I had to roll out of bed and then crawl on the floor. And finally, I could get up. And it wasn't so intense that I couldn't surrender to it.

It was just there. So I sat with that. There are greater, I know, in his case, probably of much greater intensity.

If it's all-consuming pain, physical or emotional, surrender for them. You become still, present. And your enormous energy suddenly rises.

And some people do that when they accompany a dying person also. The greatest thing, again, with a person who's dying is to bring the spaciousness to that moment. And maybe the dying person cannot do it.

Maybe in the last few moments, he or she can. But you are there to provide that space. And it's not you get out of the idea that this is so dreadful, this moment.

Everybody dies. And hold that thoughtlessness, pure awareness, field. Interesting thing, questions.

More and more, you will find people asking you questions. And the ability to differentiate between vital questions and mind-made questions. And so that you don't get drawn into trying to answer a mind-made question, any vital question, you will be surprised that the

answer will be there.

If you receive the question in stillness, vital means that the questioner truly wants and needs to know, and it is not a curious question. I wonder, or what is there beyond? What happens when you are, is there another state after enlightenment?

I've read this book, and it says that after you become free, then there's another state. I want to know about that. That's not a vital question.

A vital question is how to be free now. But it's vital. It concerns me.

It concerns someone close to me. I need to know this. That's why I don't like to give interviews, because it's very rare that in an interview, it's an artificial situation.

The interviewer comes to the set of questions. They may be good questions, but because of the artificial setting, they're rarely vital questions. Do you truly want to know that at this, does a question arise out of this moment?

And you truly need to know that now. And often I find in interviews, what comes is less alive, has less power, than what comes when it's a true question. There may still be some power.

So recognize the question, is it vital? If it's vital and it is received by you in and through stillness, you just listen deeply to the question, and the answer will come. And sooner or later you can teach the other person to do that for him or herself.

And you will be amazed at how right your answer is when you don't come from a place of needing to know the answer, but simply the open listening. That's beautiful. And then if it's not vital, cut through it in whatever way.

Or say, I don't know. I'm not even interested. Nor are you, really.

Are there any vital questions left? Okay.

[Speaker 9] (5:18:28 - 5:19:29)

Well, it's a question about reflection. And I think that I've been drawn into a... I'm just, after listening to you this morning, I have a feeling that reflection is in disguise as thinking and analyzing.

And I'd thought it for a long time. I could feel and see the word reflection, that one was sitting very, in a kind of quiet posture. And I got a little caught up with that.

But it's a euphemism. I'm having a feeling after listening to you this morning that really it's... It's just old memories.

[Speaker 1] (5:19:30 - 5:19:31)

And... Yes.

[Speaker 9] (5:19:32 - 5:19:56)

But in me, or in this body-mind organism, arises like a reflex to go over stuff. And I think I've been calling it reflection, but I have a feeling that I could call it jack-in-the-beanstalk. I mean, I could call it anything.

[Speaker 10] (5:19:57 - 5:19:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 9] (5:19:57 - 5:20:05)

I feel it. I think I'd like to hear you say something about it, if you didn't mind.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:06 - 5:20:23)

Thank you. So you mean by reflection, the habit of going over past events, perhaps recent past or more distant past, and looking at them, what you did, said, what somebody else did and said. Is that your reflection?

That is habitual?

[Speaker 9] (5:20:24 - 5:20:35)

I might even think that reflection is what you have been talking about. And I think, oh, I will go and do this thing called reflect.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:35 - 5:20:40)

Ah, right. Now, you may remember, I occasionally use the word reflect.

[Speaker 9] (5:20:41 - 5:20:41)

Oh, do you?

[Speaker 1] (5:20:41 - 5:20:44)

I'm not using it in the normal sense of the word.

[Speaker 9] (5:20:45 - 5:20:45)

I see.

[Speaker 1] (5:20:45 - 5:26:22)

In the normal sense of the word, reflection is thought activity, contemplation, thought, contemplative thought, perhaps a quiet, you sit quietly and you look and you go through

your mind concerning a situation. When I use the word reflection and I use expressions like, I reflect something to you, that is totally different. And that is also what you do when you are with people.

What you reflect to them has nothing to do with mental reflections. It's a different use of the word. It is to hold the spaciousness of presence because that is the essence of who you are underneath the mind.

When somebody then meets with you, that person recognizes in some way his or her own essence in that spaciousness. They may not even know it yet. They only may know it as a feeling of rightness and goodness at that moment when they are with you.

So when I use recognize, that is not usually an intellectual recognition, a mental recognition, a mental realization. It is often that recognition that is there when you reflect to someone as I've been reflecting all this weekend to you by simply holding, without doing anything, when I use language, it sounds as if I'm doing something, by holding that spaciousness of presence which is thoughtless awareness and something in you knows, it senses the goodness and the rightness of that. That sensing, I'm using these words because it's very hard to find the right words to describe something that is so beyond words.

That's, I'm using fairly simple words, perhaps they're less likely to mislead one, sensing the goodness and rightness of this moment, of being here at this moment. That is because through some form, some form has become transparent enough so that that spaciousness can shine through the form. The spaciousness reflects back to you who you are.

You recognize yourself, not through any thought activity. So it's being yourself. It's like arriving home.

This is good. Perhaps you have no idea about it, just as when my transformation happened, I had no idea in my head, I couldn't explain it. So that's the meaning of reflection in a different sense.

And that is your job is to hold the space of presence so that people can find themselves, their essence, when they come to you. They don't come to see you, they come to find themselves. Nobody comes to see me.

Why would they travel such a long distance to see me? And the strange thing is they travel a long distance to find themselves. If that works, fine.

At some point they realize I don't need to travel anymore. Except if I enjoy it. It may longer be a need, but you may still enjoy that reflection.

A deepening is still there, that your own realization deepens when in that reflection. And

it's beautiful. So for a while you travel and it deepens and then you no longer need to travel, but you still do it because you enjoy it.

Until that may fall away too. And then people travel to come be with you and they enjoy that. And so that's beautiful.

It's not that really nobody comes to see you, never feel that they come to see me, because then you get into dilemma. Are they going to, am I going to disappoint them? Am I going to give them what they need and want?

Will I be able to give them what they need and want? They've come such a long way. Is it, do they think it's worth it?

What, oh my God, can I live up to their expectations and the image they have of me? What if I fail? What if I, but if you know they don't come to see you, oh, they come because there's less of you because you're transparent to the light, which is the case when you become present, the spaciousness is there.

They come for that transparency. Nothing to do with you. That's a relief.

I don't have to do anything. That's, oh, that's good to know. And there's no credit.

There's nobody who claims that I have transformed. This weekend, I transformed 30 people, 400 people. Nothing.

And I failed. And then there were another hundred with whom I failed miserably. They didn't become transformed.

[Speaker 6] (5:26:34 - 5:27:13)

This is a question about the mind and working with the mind. I can be in your presence and have no mind. I can sit in meditation sometimes and not go for a walk in the morning and all of a sudden the mind starts coming in.

Don't forget to order this. Don't forget to do that. I carry a piece of paper, notice myself taking it out, writing it down, more and more and more.

How do you work with a mind that is helping you to do your job? I run a retreat center and I have to listen to those things and work with them. But sometimes it's too much.

How do you work with the mind?

[Speaker 1] (5:27:14 - 5:33:54)

Yes. So, of course, it's very helpful at times. You need that.

You need to remember things. But the mind tends to come in the most inappropriate

times and tell you, you must think about this now. You're out in nature.

You're not sitting in your office where you are. That is the space where you focus on what you need to deal with. Now, it may be simply a thought that you suddenly remember while you're walking out in nature.

And it may be a very valid thought. You might forget it and you write it down. The question is whether that thought then becomes a mind stream.

If it's just a thought, it might be a useful thought. You write it down and then you're back perceiving, walking, being present. But any thought has this tendency of wanting to prolong itself because it is a temporary, a very short-lived little being.

It's an energy field. It's a creation. It is a mind creation.

The thought is, almost every thought is an entity. No entity wants to go. It wants to carry on and, if possible, grow.

So there's a tendency for any thought to lead to proliferation of thought. And then when you don't know that, and the thought likes to pretend that it's more important than it really is, you need to think about this now. So more and more, it will be easier for you to see thoughts that come and to know whether this is truly important now or whether that is the mind simply trying to stay in control and not allow you to be present.

Is this truly important at this moment? No. If it's not important and you recognize it, what I'm just describing verbally, this question, Is this truly important at this moment?

becomes a non-verbal, non-mental way of looking at the thought and recognizing whether that thought has a place now or whether this is not its place. And then you recognize that this is not the thought that you need now. And then it drifts out.

You allow it to go so it doesn't proliferate. So we talked two days ago, perhaps, about your, I use that expression, your relationship to thought. And so the very fact that you are having a relationship to thought, which is just a way of speaking, a way of pointing, you are not making thought into an enemy.

You have no enemies. But your relationship to thought is to realize no thought is absolutely important. It's only important in the world of relativity.

Every thought likes to pretend that this matters. And a good example is waking up in the middle of the night. And of course, this is a case where often thoughts proliferate.

You can't sleep. And suddenly you remember all the things that you still need to do, one on top of the other. And it becomes suffocating almost because you're lying in bed and you can't do anything.

But you have all these, I need to deal with that. And then I will be faced with that problem. And then that person will come.

And what am I going to do about that? And you're not, this is not the space to deal with any of it. You are in bed.

To recognize that as the momentum of the mind, it wants to, we must think about this now. Think about this now. And so it will be easier for you now as presence is emerging to take one step back, even from a very agitated mind, and know that here is an agitated mind.

That is enough to have already some freedom from it, to know there's an agitated mind. And it goes on and on. And perhaps you cannot immediately switch it off.

But you start by simply saying, I accept that there's an agitated mind here, which means you're already out of it. But occasionally you get back in. And at that moment when you know that, there also comes a choice.

For example, the choice could be, even while you're having an agitated mind, to feel the aliveness in your hands. So you still allow the mind to be agitated. And while you allow your mind to be agitated, you could even combine it with this gesture that I like so much, and that is simply holding.

And while you hold in this gesture, which is the beautiful, essentially feminine, female gesture of total receptivity, often found in Virgin Mary, that beautiful openness of holding, the softness of that. And what you're holding is your agitated mind is in there, in that you're holding that. And while you hold, you sense the aliveness that is there.

And so the mind will then calm down without you trying to make the mind stop by itself. Simply this gentle holding. And you hold with here.

This is the gesture. And there's an energy field in that holding. It's symbolic, and it's a little bit more than symbolic too.

And you hold. So it's a gentle relationship with your mind. It's a little bit like the mind is like a child.

What do you do with it? You hold the child. So have that relationship with your mind.

It's not a big monster. It's the human mind. It does what it does.

[Speaker 8] (5:34:00 - 5:34:23)

Oh, Eckhart, I wanted to ask you if you would be kind enough, we talked yesterday about a situation that might be if you're facilitating a group, but if you're working individually, like in a group, you might play a video or an audio and then meditate. When you're

seeing people individually in the years that you did that, how would that look? What could be one way that might be?

[Speaker 1] (5:34:26 - 5:44:30)

Do you mean when I saw people all those years? Do you mean what was the structure of it? Yes, yes.

There wasn't much structure. And people would come through word of mouth. I remember we sat together once or twice in London.

I've known Victoria for many, many, many years. And then there was a long gap when we lost touch. And then Victoria discovered the book.

And so we got in touch again. It was all wonderful. And we sat together in stillness once or twice in my living room.

And still it feels it's now. And you said, I can feel gentle. Something, I don't remember the exact words.

And we sat in silence. With some people, I would sit mostly in silence. And other people would come as if it were a therapeutic, a therapy session.

And they would do a lot of talking. And I would do a lot of listening, listening, listening. Didn't know yet the power that is in the listening until this lady came and said, you are a healer, you are healing.

That was the emanation that comes through the state of stillness. And I tried out different things for a while because my understanding wasn't yet fully developed. For a while, I used sometimes visualizations with people to get them to a place of peace.

And then that wasn't quite right until a totally natural way evolved of being with people. And the characteristic of that is, and that applies to all those people who are doing significant transformational work with others in whatever capacity. It's often the case that they do what they do and it comes so intuitively, they couldn't describe to you what they do.

And it's because it comes out of the state of presence. Before I could be fully effective so that that inner state became externalized as a teaching when I was, for quite a few years, I was working with people. It was in the process of becoming externalized through meeting those people and being with all those people at the time.

It was not yet fully grown, almost one could say. It took time. There was no time in that state, but it took time for that state to become externalized as a powerful teaching stream.

Not only the words that were part of that, but also the energy that emanates. It was already emanating there, but it was still growing the externalization of it. So all that was a process of externalization over time.

But even there, quite a few people already experienced a transformation there. For some people, it was already very powerful and it worked. Others, I couldn't get through yet.

Certain other people who came with very dense minds and yet wasn't, couldn't, the mind was still able to not receive. So I could, would be an interesting story to write about all these things. And what happened, less and less, the structure became less and less in a way.

And I couldn't call it anything anymore. What do you call it? Healer, spiritual therapy.

For a while, I thought, well, I need some label. What do you do? I just sit there and you come and we sit together and I listen.

And then what? Nothing. That was also the time perhaps when we sat together, I gave the first talk, public talk.

I met a man. There was a little gathering and I met this man who worked for the Theosophical Society and I talked to him for five minutes about nothing special. And he said, you must come and talk to us.

We need you at the Theosophical Society. So at about that time, that was the first talk. I gave a formal talk rather than talking to a few people informally.

That was things. So I went to the Theosophical Society and the title of my talk was, because they wanted, you need a label, spiritual dimension in psychotherapy. And there were maybe 25, 30 people there, maybe similar to this group.

And so that was the beginning of speaking and that also grew through time. So it's always the case, and you also are finding that already, I'm sure many of you, and increasingly find that you don't have to do much. It is being done for you.

You're just the opening. And so that's the case with even the effective, truly effective therapists. They don't do much.

It just happens. And then sometimes they come people and say they must have a secret. What is it that they...

There's this thing called NLP. I don't know. I haven't investigated too much about it.

But that started with people looking in detail how three effective therapists work. And they couldn't explain how they work because they just did it. It just happened.

But they started watching them and writing down whatever they do because they're so effective. We must know what they do. Now they're mirroring the other person's movements.

They didn't know they were doing that. They were so in tune that when the client they were listening to moved, they moved with him. They didn't even know it.

And then the eyes go that way when he asked that question, and then they go there. And that became a system. And I believe that is the same case with Tai Chi, which I feel very strongly because I've experienced that.

It doesn't happen often. Spontaneous movement, joyful expression of presence through the physical realm, the body spontaneously, suddenly beginning to move. And it looks as if I've been doing Tai Chi, I don't know anything about Tai Chi.

It's just moving like a very slow dance. And I'm sure the origin of Tai Chi was a few people spontaneously because they lived in presence moved because it was a joyful expression of presence. And then someone said, oh, that looks interesting.

And they became fascinated not just by watching the harmony of the movement, but by sensing the energy field behind the movement. And the more and more people looked and then they would come every day hoping that the master would move again. But of course, he or she wouldn't move every day.

And at some point they said, we have to learn this. And then they came with a piece of paper. Now his left leg goes up.

Now the arm moves slowly outward. And then over time, it became something that you can learn. No longer the real thing that originates directly from presence.

And yet, even if it's a system, it still has certain effectiveness. In fact, rather than arising from presence, the movement can take you into presence. But originally it arose out of presence.

So now we reverse that. It's become a bit of a system, a method, and it takes you into presence. So that works too.

But I know for sure, nobody, I haven't read this anywhere, that the origin was spontaneous expression. So it's a beautiful thing, Tai Chi, Qigong. You can't do it unless you're present.

You won't be very good at it unless at every stage, not trying to get from here to there, not hoping that, okay, I need to get there now. No, you're here, here, here, here, always here, never mentally there. And I know nothing about Tai Chi.

Now, was there one more question from you? Maybe then that'll maybe the last.

[Speaker 7] (5:44:31 - 5:44:51)

Before my question, I just want to add another perspective on charging or not charging that great healer in New York City who charged for his healing, and he was very effective laying on of hands. And he said, you don't charge for the healing, but you charge for your time.

[Speaker 1] (5:44:51 - 5:44:52)

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 7] (5:44:52 - 5:44:56)

In the Western society. What you have is your time.

[Speaker 1] (5:44:56 - 5:45:00)

Yes, that's another perspective on it, which also contains some truth. Yes.

[Speaker 7] (5:45:02 - 5:46:37)

And now my question. I have a private practice for many, many, many years, which transforms as I do. And at this point, I've been incorporating your teaching into every session, which has given new aliveness to my work, which was getting flat.

An aspect of what I do has to do with emotional healing, where the client lies down and I have them breathe and take them out of the mind and into the body and into what they're feeling. And I'm very aware now of not wanting to support a client being stuck in on the level of story. However, there is a place where, as you once said in a tape, where experiences, let's say with a parent that have not been accepted, get stuck and then becomes a cloud in which somebody perceives other relationships or themselves or whatever, and that could obscure their ability to experience presence.

And so my question is, when I'm bringing a client into the emotional body and there is an issue around a parent or around something that has to do with the past, where is that point where you're allowing the story to take over and the emotions to kind of just run through that and you're losing effectiveness and where is the place for working on the level of story?

[Speaker 1] (5:46:37 - 5:55:26)

Yes. The story is helpful to know. Sometimes the story is not even known.

Of course, it can happen that an emotion, a residue of emotion is there and there's not even a memory of where it came from. And sometimes as presence grows, it can happen that suddenly a memory comes back. That's not always necessarily reliable because it

could be also sometimes a symbolic expression.

But the memory comes back, let's say it is a memory of what happened or the memory was already there, but a non-recognition of the emotion that went with it. So the memory was there, that is another possibility, but the person was unaware of the emotional charge that was because the child had to cut him or herself off from that in order to avoid unbearable suffering. So it's just as possible that the memory continued but not the person, the adult, then thinks, it remembers that incident or series of incidents or what used to happen at home, behavior of one of other parents, but no longer can feel and thinks I don't have emotion around it.

Yes, my father would do this or that whenever he got drunk, just an example, but I didn't feel, it felt I didn't feel bad about it. And then after a while, but that badness may come up at other times, not knowing that there is the origin. So it's good to recognize the connection between a memory and an emotion.

And once you have seen where it is, not to perpetuate these two so that they link into each other, because the emotion will want to perpetuate itself. And once the person knows where it originally came from, and even that may not have been the true origin, it may just have added to the pain body that was already there, already born into this world and just added more to that. So the pain body always tries to perpetuate the story, think more about it, talk more about it.

But once you have seen it, oh, I've recognized it now, that's what it was, then to focus more, to cut the link between the pain body and mind activity. You've already seen. And now just be aware of the emotion and hold it.

It is human fear. It is human anger. It is human sadness.

And recognizing that in one way or another, all humans experience those things who come into this world. And that's your way of experiencing those human emotions and holding them. And gradually that takes out the self out of the emotion, a continuous attempt to seek yourself even in that painful emotion and thinking that is essentially me.

That is the essence of me, of who I am. By holding it, that is allowing it to be. And that's good if they do it with you together until they can do it for themselves.

And if there's a gradual recognition of the unpersonal, non-personal nature of those emotions, although the events, the triggering events seemed a personal situation, but the resulting emotion is human pain, is human anger, is human fear. And in every human, to a lesser or greater degree, those things will become activated, those emotions, just by living in this world. And this is your essential teaching now is that as you hold the space of presence, they join you in presence and more and more recognize their essential identity as the observing presence, as the holding, as the space in which

they're holding that emotion.

So with your help, as you hold the space of presence, it's almost you become one while they sit with you. You're one already anyway, but now you realize that you are one. There's that oneness.

And as presence grows in them, self-identification with the emotion will shrink. And when the self-identification with the emotion shrinks, that also means the link between thought processes and emotions is severed. And then it begins the transmutation of the energy that is trapped in those emotions.

And it's no longer consuming a large part of your aliveness, because if there's a heavy pain body, the heavy pain body will consume an enormous amount of energy and suck the aliveness out of you. It should not be stuck in there and become pain. And then the pain is freed.

And now as presence rises, that pain, the energy that is in that pain, its vibrational frequency changes into presence. That is why I have often found that people with heavy pain bodies have fairly quickly woken up because there was so much energy and actually the pain body fueled once a certain degree of presence is there and it's strong enough, the pain body fuels the growing presence. The energy that was trapped in there changes its, because there's only one energy, but the vibrational frequency of fear or sadness, of course, is very different from the highest of presence, changes its frequency.

Some of the most dreadfully unhappy people have woken up and some of them in the most miserable, unhappy conditions have suddenly woken up. And that pain became presence, fuel for presence. Also, an external situation that is dreadful that you may find yourself in can become fuel for presence.

That's the more unpleasant, the more fuel for presence. That's how this counts of people in the most dreadful situations suddenly waking up out of all that. So it's beautiful work and that is the essence of what you do now.

You're teaching presence and whoever comes joins you. It's like bringing a, I have this image of a log that's only burning a little or not burning, not even burning yet. Put it close to another log in the fire that's already burning and then quickly that one burns too.

So you're all logs. Let's become just... It's been a wonderful weekend of stillness, of words, but always stillness, even during the words, while words were being spoken, the essence of this gathering has always been and is the stillness, the spaciousness underneath or around the words.

And it's always been just about that one thing, nothing else at all. Only one thing matters absolutely. Everything else matters relatively.

Only one thing matters. That's actually in the New Testament. Only one thing matters and you have chosen that one thing.

That's a quotation from the New Testament, but it's right for this moment.

[Speaker 10] (5:56:01 - 5:56:02)

Thank you.